



Carl G. Lauro Elementary School

CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 2, 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 have to start with a big thank you to all of our teachers, staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, custodians, administrators, and community partners. Your hard work over the summer and during the past few weeks gave our students a strong start to the school year. I've been able to visit many schools this week, and you can feel the excitement in the air.

A lot of the things we're doing in Providence take time – like building new schools or putting a new curriculum in place. This year we're going to start seeing a lot of that work pay off.

Of course, we still have plenty to work on. We're in a state intervention for a reason. We're going to keep finding things that went neglected for decades that we need to fix. And it won't be easy, but that's alright. I've seen what we can accomplish together.

Working together, we provided quality summer learning for 3,000 students across all grade levels. Last year, we were one of the first school districts to go back in-person learning during the pandemic because we knew that's where students learn best.

We can do the hard things. We just have to do them together. So thank you all again for your teamwork in getting this year started off right.



Dr. Javier Montañez, Superintendent, with RIDE Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green and PPSP staff at the bus yard on the first day of school.

DISTRICT UPDATES

Rebuilding Our Schools

All across our district, schools are being improved, renovated, and rebuilt. To learn more about several of these ongoing projects, like the state-of-the-art Narducci Learning Center or the extensive work at Hope High School, check out Providence's [Capital Infrastructure Improvement Plan](#). It has several renderings and extensive details of projects that will build a brighter future for our students.

Back to School Information

If you have questions about the new school year, we've got you covered! [Click here](#) to watch a video from the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and Providence Schools covering new information and frequently asked questions for 2022-23. You can also check out our [Back to School page](#) to find important resources on things like student meals, attendance support, school safety plans, and more.

Early Dismissal Days

An important reminder for all PPSP community members: the 2022-23 school year will have eight days where all schools will have 2-hour early dismissals for teacher professional development. These dates are:

- Wednesday, September 21, 2022
- Wednesday, October 19, 2022
- Wednesday, November 16, 2022
- Wednesday, December 14, 2022
- Wednesday, January 25, 2023
- Wednesday, February 8, 2023
- Wednesday, March 15, 2023
- Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Families will receive reminders of these 2-hour early dismissal days throughout the year. You can find the [full academic calendar here](#).

EQUITY IN PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

As a former Teacher, Instructional Coach, Principal, and Central Office Administrator, it is indeed an honor to serve students and their families in this newly developed role. We must create a culture in which everyone, but specifically, our young people, feels a deep sense of belonging.

Our mission is to increase equitable access for students, so they may achieve a high quality and competitive education. We will advocate for young people and their families, and emphasize the importance of diversity in promoting the learning and development that leads to successful college completion and/or competitive high wage careers.

The goals for this year are to deepen knowledge, learn strategies and skills that support culturally responsive teaching, and enhance dispositions to engage and apply content about race, gender, identity, ethnicity, ability status, multilingualism, and equity for all staff in their respective roles. This is a learning year for all of us. We will be calling on parents and others in the community to share their expertise, ideas, and suggestions as we continue to build capacity and expand. We look forward to leading and learning together.

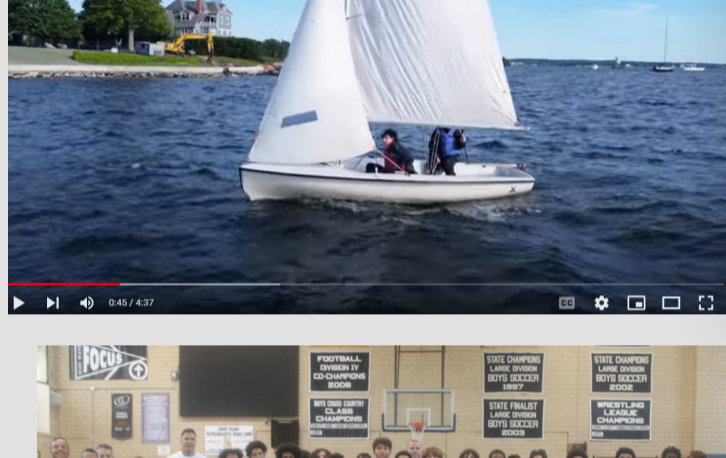
Please check out our [Equity and Belonging website here](#), to view frameworks, updated information for stakeholders, and additional resources. And remember, Hispanic Heritage Month starts September 15!



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.



BACK ON THE WATER

Now that the school year is here at **Classical High School**, the sailing team is back on the water and ready for another successful year. The program, now in its sixth year, welcomes any student to its 12 member team. Coach Christopher O'Connell is committed to building a team atmosphere based on trust and mutual respect. [Click here to watch a feature video](#) on the Classical sailing team and how students are gaining life skills and valuable experience on the water this year.



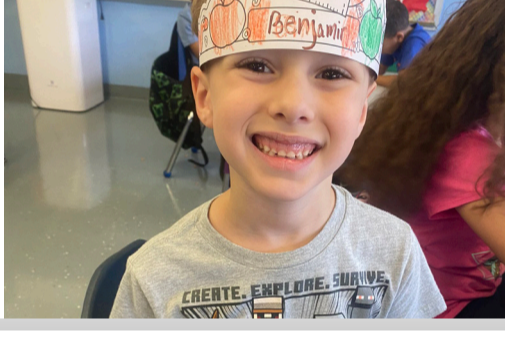
A WEEK OF WRESTLING

Right before school started, the **Hope High School** wrestling team, **Providence Police Department**, and **Beat the Streets New England** teamed up to put on a free, week-long wrestling camp at Hope. The week was capped off by a visit from the Superintendent and a cookout celebration for the 70 wrestlers who took part.



A WARM WELCOME

Students at **Vartan Gregorian Elementary** had an extra exciting first day of school on Monday, thanks to a warm welcome by student-athletes from **Brown University**! Thank you to everyone who took time to help these young learners start the year off right.



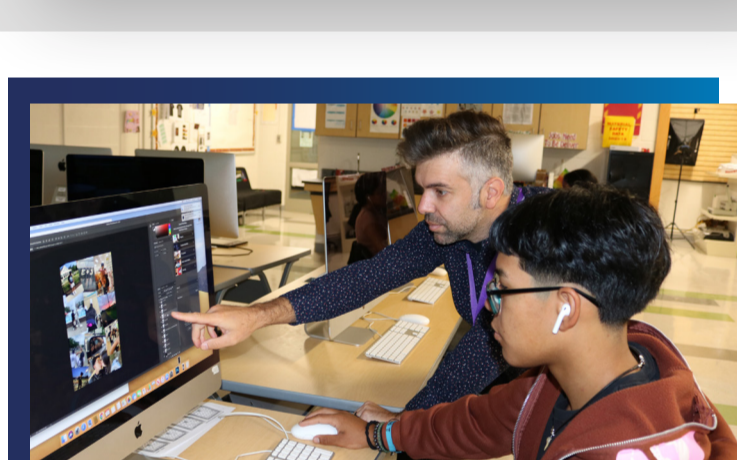
BACK AT IT

It was right back to work on day one of school for students at **Harry Kizirian Elementary**! Students worked on counting, collaborating with each other, and making introductions to other students and staff throughout the day to start the year off right.



RETURNING IN STYLE

It was a red carpet-style welcome for students at **Gilbert Stuart Middle School**, thanks to staff and folks from **Black Sororities and Fraternities** who gathered to cheer students on their way into the building. Thank you to everyone who took the time to make this a memorable first day for our students!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

Michael Lamantia
CTE Media Arts Instructor

Located in: Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA)

Joined PPSP in: 2012

What's the day-to-day like as a Media Arts Instructor?

In our typical day at PCTA we do theory work to start, that covers safety and everything from the terminology of graphic design all the way to the inner workings of how equipment operates. Our students also work hard studying for their Adobe Certification with training modules where they go through in-depth tutorials on using the software. The second half of the day is when we apply what they learned into a hands-on experience. So, when you walk into our lab you might find kids designing on computers, heat pressing t-shirts, and bringing their designs to life. We also have a TV studio and a space where students produce podcasts and livestream their productions. It's great to see them come up with an idea on paper and then bring it into the digital world or come running up with their creation on a t-shirt!

"We have this great program where students can go out and get real world experience and get paid for it. We're all looking forward to providing more of that to set our students on a career path."

How has the program grown since you've been at PCTA?

When I started my career in education, social media platforms like YouTube were being used, but not as influential as they are today. Now we have digital celebrities and digital media is growing and changing so quickly. The equipment in our industry has become a lot more affordable, so it's great that we have the funding and resources to purchase equipment that is used in our industry for our students to learn how to operate. To see them use our great technology and excited about completing assignments and projects in class is incredible. That's why we tell students – what you just designed in class using Adobe Photoshop, that is a job! It is called being a Graphic Designer and you can get paid for that! They may not realize that they can make money doing something they are passionate about.

What are you most proud of during your time here?

There's a few! One that comes to mind is our students winning the gold medal in TV video production in 2013 and for the last two years in the Skills USA competition. That's really exciting to see our students compete against their peers at the national level in their tech area. They actually just came back from Atlanta this summer where they competed against all the state winners in this country!

It's also great when the skills students learn here translate over to the real world. For example, we just had a student who was working at an internship through our program who ended up getting hired over the summer as a graphic designer. That's huge!

What do you wish more people knew about your job?

We're a full-on print shop and it gives our students hands-on experience working with clients and producing a variety of real-world jobs. We can make t-shirts, banners, flyers, posters, you name it, right here at PCTA. Our graphics program also offers college credits! Upon graduation, students can earn 5 Credits towards their Associates degree in Digital Media Production at NEIT and two classes towards NEIT's Graphics, Multi-Media, and Web Design Program.

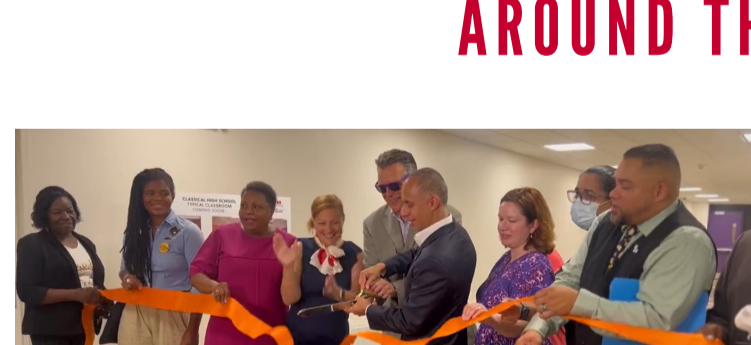
What are you most looking forward to this school year?

This year, providing more internship opportunities for students. We have this great program where students can go out and get real world experience and get paid for it. We're all looking forward to providing more of that to set our students on a career path. I think that's such a valuable advantage as our kids graduate and look to their next step as these internship opportunities provide such a learning experience and can introduce students to not just a job, but a career in a field they are passionate about!

IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

- [Lost in Translation: Providence schools talk resources for English learning students](#)
WJAR, August 29
- [Providence students back to school with new social, emotional resources](#)
ABC6, August 29
- [Back to school celebrations held for Providence families](#)
WPRI, August 25
- [RI's David Duke, now an NBA player, gives back by hosting a Community Day in Providence](#)
Providence Journal, August 22
- [Providence is embracing high school e-sports](#)
Boston Globe, August 15

AROUND THE DISTRICT



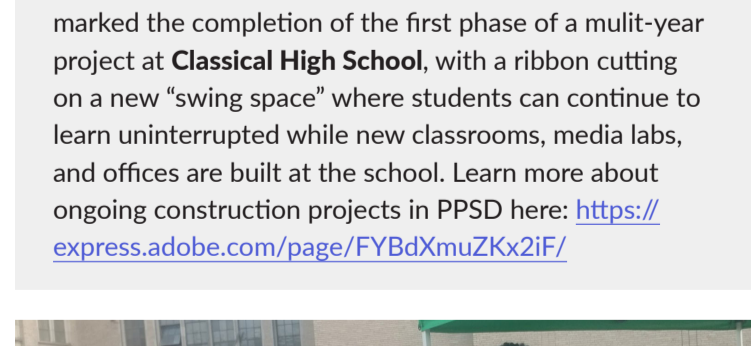
CLASSICAL CONSTRUCTION

Schools across Providence continue to get modernized through much-needed renovation projects. This week marked the completion of the first phase of a multi-year project at **Classical High School**, with a ribbon cutting on a new "swing space" where students can continue to learn uninterrupted while new classrooms, media labs, and offices are built at the school. Learn more about ongoing construction projects in PPSP here: <https://express.adoobe.com/page/FYBdXmuZKx2iF/>



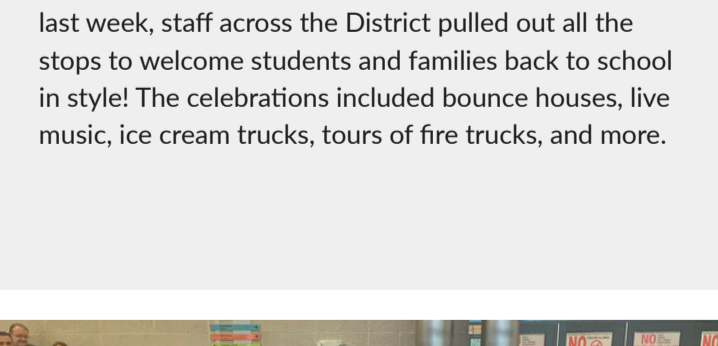
BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS

Creating a culture of community and respect is key to building the school district our students deserve. So last week, staff across the District pulled out all the stops to welcome students and families back to school in style! The celebrations included bounce houses, live music, ice cream trucks, tours of fire trucks, and more.



BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

This year, **Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island** and a number of **community partners** once again teamed up to distribute brand new backpacks to students at several locations across the state. If you missed the event last weekend, don't worry. Extra backpacks have been provided to schools, so check with your school's office to see if you can pick one up.



PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

Teachers and staff across the District, like the group above from **PCTA**, spent several weeks before the start of school preparing for students to return on August 29. This included hundreds of hours of professional development and preparing classrooms for the start of school. Thank you for all of your hard work!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- **LABOR DAY (NO SCHOOL)**
Monday, September 5, 2022
- **PRIMARY ELECTION DAY (NO SCHOOL)**
Tuesday, September 13, 2022
- **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.