



Providence's Plan for Our Schools: Building a Brighter Future

April 2025



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

As Mayor, there is no priority more important than offering Providence children and youth a world-class education. I have heard from the community the eagerness for the City of Providence to manage Providence Public School District (PPSD). I share that vision for a bright future for our students as we deepen the partnership between the City and the District as we integrate our management and align our resources and priorities.

This plan sets the course for the City's preparation to oversee the District and to ensure a smooth and integrated approach with strong leadership and commitment to continuously improving educational experiences for our students.

This plan will continue the District's progress on goals of the Turnaround Action Plan. We join the State and the District in celebrating PPSD's increase in student achievement on both math and English Language Arts on the 2024 RICAS. Student absenteeism continues to decline across the District and the number of career and technical education programs has almost doubled. The City and PPSD have partnered on a \$1 billion capital plan so that all of our students learn in new or like-new school buildings that facilitate 21st century learning. In 2024, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School became the District's first elementary school—and the second PPSD school after Classical High School—to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. As we plan for the return of PPSD to local management, we will continue this progress and maintain our dedication to the Turnaround Action Plan in close partnership with leadership at the District

Education has been a priority since day one when I took office in January 2023, when we hosted a large, community-wide conversation on education. In the years since, the Return to Local Control Cabinet—a group of partners from the Providence School Board, City Council, and senior members of my team guiding the City's planning for the District—has overseen a robust community engagement strategy and internal technical review to guide the City's thinking and planning to manage the District.

The return of PPSD to local management is an opportunity to implement the shared vision for a world-class Pre-K to 12 education where every student has the resources to succeed and continue the academic progress made during the State intervention. We will address long-standing systems, operations, and governance hurdles that have gone unaddressed for decades, and center community voices as we plan for this next phase of public education in Providence. Aligning the City, School Board, and City Council at every stage to improve student outcomes will ensure that we place the needs and priorities of our children and youth first to support our students' long-term success.

Our vision for a world-class education includes universal, high-quality Pre-K so all our children have a critical foundation for lifelong learning and are ready for the first day of Kindergarten. Many Providence elementary schools demonstrate high academic achievement. In the City's vision for Pre-K to 12 education, students and educators at all PPSD elementary schools will have the resources to support high academic achievement in each of their classrooms. Targeted interventions will improve student outcomes and increase student achievement in middle school—and allow students to develop leadership skills and participate in enrichment like the arts, athletics, and clubs during these critical years. Our middle school students will be able to identify a high school program that best supports their academic goals. Each of our high school students will learn about the various post-secondary opportunities and pathways—and will have a clear plan at graduation, whether for



college, career and technical education, employment, or a combination of these pathways. Support for multilingual learners and students receiving special education services will be integral to and interwoven in our work to offer a world-class education at our elementary, middle, and high schools.

Thoughtfully designed learning spaces, both indoors and outdoors, can enhance learning, engagement, creativity, and well-being. Safe school facilities with modern security and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) will allow for 21st century learning across our schools—and will ensure that these are safe spaces for learning and exploration. A well-designed green schoolyard plays a crucial role in supporting students’ academic, social, and emotional growth while fostering a culture of innovation.

The City is prepared to respond to the challenges that led to the State intervention in 2019. We are ready to build a thriving public school system so that this type of intervention never occurs again for our schools. Our vision for education at PPSD will be supported by a system that values equity, access, and high standards for students, educators, and school-based leaders. This report presents the City’s vision to build a stronger, more responsive school system for our students and a rewarding and supportive professional environment for our dedicated educators and school-based leaders. I invite everyone to become involved in building this brighter future and support the Turnaround Action Plan at providenceri.gov/tap. I look forward to a partnership with our district leadership, students, educators, families and caregivers, and community partners, in this work to provide a world-class public education for each child in Providence,

Sincerely,



Mayor Brett P. Smiley





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring a quality education for all students is among the highest priorities for a city government. Since the State intervention in the Providence Public School District (PPSD) began in 2019, the District has made progress on goals outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan (TAP), including on increasing student achievement on the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS); declining student absenteeism; increasing the number of opportunities for career and technical education (CTE) for our high school students; and continued implementation of the \$1 billion capital plan that will provide much-needed investments in our school buildings. PPSD is at a critical and pivotal moment as the State, the District, and the City prepare to transition the District from State to local management. Since taking office, Mayor Smiley has prioritized strategies for the City to improve outcomes for children, both in and out of the classroom.

The Smiley Administration formalized a collaboration with the Providence School Board and Providence City Council to prepare for the return of PPSD to the City's management in Fall 2023 when the Mayor established the Return to Local Control Cabinet. The Cabinet has been an intergovernmental working group of School Board members and senior staff from both the City Council and Mayor's Office which guides the City's strategy for the District's return.

By Spring 2024, the Cabinet established the City's workplan to prepare for the District's return to local control. The strategies included:

1. Developing a plan for re-integrating District operations that addresses inefficient and burdensome City systems to ensure the effective governance of PPSD after the District transitions back to local control,
2. Investing in and promoting programs that will support PPSD's efforts to implement the Turnaround Action Plan, and
3. Engaging with the community to develop responsive solutions and community participation in improving student outcomes.

Following the direction set by the Cabinet, the Administration has developed this action plan through a review of internal processes with expertise and collaboration from across City government and informed

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by robust community engagement. A community survey and in-person Community Conversations on Education involved nearly 1,200 community members and promoted a wide range of opportunities to advance the Turnaround Action Plan. Community Voices on Providence Public Schools, the Administration's report on community engagement was released in February 2025 and informed the Administration's approach.

This plan focuses on the City's responsibilities and opportunities to build a stronger, more responsive school system for our students. Priorities are defined for community and caregiver engagement, supporting learning, governance, funding, supporting talent, procurement, data management, and facilities. Priority actions for each area stem from a close analysis of concerns identified in the 2019 Johns Hopkins Review of the District, community concerns elevated during engagement, and an assessment of current processes that emphasized the past, current, and future states for systems, operations, and governance of PPSD. These actions address the multiple systems and operational concerns that motivated and necessitated the State intervention in PPSD. Priorities are established for actions the City is taking now during the State intervention, as well as once the District returns to local control. Addressing these priorities will allow educators, school-based leaders, and PPSD administrators to focus on what they do and care about most: Offering a high-quality and personalized public education to every student in Providence.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

Community Engagement: During the State intervention and when the District returns to local control, the City will continue strategic engagement for the community to share their perspectives on education with the Mayor and Administration and to reflect on the City's preparation for the return of PPSD to local management. This continuing community engagement will allow the City to maintain accountability on progress during the transition and once the District returns to local control. Our community engagement strategy will center topics that are uplifting, collaborative, and feel worthwhile to families and caregivers and increase the quantity and variety of ways that PPSD communicates with the community about family and caregiver engagement opportunities. The City will support prioritizing having an adequate number of staff in District offices engaging families and caregivers, including the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) office, and will work with District leadership to identify the best staffing model for this office. Additionally, the City will leverage the resources of City departments serving youth, including the Department of Recreation and the Division of Human Services, to support the FACE office in their outreach to families and caregivers.

Supporting Learning at PPSD: During the State intervention, the City will continue to support programming that advance progress on key metrics outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan, including after-school tutoring and homework help programs at Recreation Centers. When the District returns to local management, the City will support the Superintendent and District leadership team with a vision for continued implementation of priorities of the Turnaround Action Plan with ongoing engagement of critical stakeholders, including educators, families, and students. The City will support the Superintendent in ensuring that introduction of the Pre-K through 8 model within the District results in improved student outcomes and higher student achievement, especially in middle school grades. Learning during the school day will be augmented with and complemented by high-quality after-school and summer programs for our children and youth. The City will engage with both PPSD and RIDE in resource mapping and program evaluation to identify areas for continued improvement and gaps that remain in the District's current initiatives to make progress on priorities of the Turnaround Action Plan.

Governance: The School Board, City Council, and City of Providence will represent the concerns of the community and serve as the main governing entities when PPSD returns to local control. The

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Superintendent will serve as part of the Mayor's senior leadership team and will supervise PPSD and serve as the chief administrator of the Providence School Board. Priorities before the return to local control include ongoing professional development on student outcomes focused governance for the new hybrid School Board and establishing effective communication and collaboration among all three governing entities and the District. These foundations must remain in place as the District fully integrates, ensuring continuity and effective leadership.

Funding, Finances, and City of Providence Budget Support: The City is committed to honoring the current PPSD funding settlement agreement with RIDE, including the fiscal year 2027 commitment to increase the local contribution to PPSD by the same percentage as the total increase of state aid. The City will ensure continued adequate funding for the District consistent with state law including through 2030, and advocate for local resources to meet the District's needs. We will support other priorities related to youth and education, including more than \$1 billion in school facilities investments and ongoing after-school and summer programming. When PPSD returns to local management, the District will be fully integrated in the City's budget development process. The Mayor and the District will finalize a proposed budget together to be submitted for the Providence City Council's budget hearing and approval process. The City will also support PPSD leadership to build upon ongoing school-based budgeting for principals and other school-based administrators and will work to foster a collaborative relationship with PPSD's Finance Department.

Supporting Talent at PPSD: Educators and school-based leaders are the heart of PPSD—and the City is committed to providing them with a fulfilling professional experience and supporting them in offering high-quality instruction to our students. The City recommends that PPSD implement shared accountability to attract and retain high-quality and professional educator workforce. In a shared accountability model, District leadership, school-based leaders, and community partners together work towards improving student outcomes. This includes fostering a leadership team, both within PPSD and across the School Board, City, and City Council that supports collaborative decision-making structures; accountability for administrators; site-based management; evaluating educators on both the quality of their instruction and their years of service at the District; and teacher accountability based on professional standards. Empowered leadership; performance-based incentives; and pathways for professional growth will remain at the core of the City's approach to site-based management at PPSD. The City will support the District Superintendent in their role in holding school-based leaders accountable to fostering collaborative leadership teams at their schools. The City is also committed to supporting educator retention and to offering more opportunities for professional development.

Procurement: The City will improve functions that, while behind-the-scenes, are critical to improved student outcomes, including purchasing. The City is committed to making purchasing easier for schools in partnership with PPSD's Purchasing Department. The City will evaluate ways to accelerate timelines so that purchasing practices will move efficiently—this may need to include more frequent Board of Contract and Supply meetings and School Board Finance committee meetings. The City will also communicate with District leadership on the new rules that will guide purchasing when the District returns to local management. We will also assess the impact of the 2022 Charter revisions that increased the procurement threshold to \$10,000 for general supplies and \$20,000 for construction to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability. This assessment will inform whether the City amends the Charter in 2027, the next allowed date, to further increase the procurement threshold to best serve purchases for the District. The City will assess the time to purchase items before the State intervention and under the new procurement threshold and seek feedback from school-based leaders on their experience purchasing supplies with the new threshold.

Data and Data Management Systems: To support student achievement and wellbeing, many entities gather data on Providence schools, including PPSD, RIDE, community partners, and various departments within the City of Providence. During the transition, the City will develop systems to allow for better collection, management, and security of student performance data. This includes identifying

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roles and functions that may be duplicative within the City of Providence and PPSD's information technology (IT) departments. We will also aim to draft new data sharing agreements (DSAs) and update existing DSAs between the City and PPSD to share key student performance data, including data on attendance and out-of-school learning time. When the District returns to local management, we will prioritize collaborative data and information systems to keep Providence students safe. We will continue to strengthen PPSD's internal IT capacity and security and work to better align systems at the City and District to better track student attendance for consistent data collection and reporting at schools and Recreation Centers.

Facilities: The PPSD capital plan is a successful example of the City, PPSD, and RIDE upholding the Collaborative Working Agreement and working together to ensure that every student has access to a new or like new school. During the transition, the City will continue implementation of PPSD's capital plan that will invest more than \$1 billion in new and like-new school buildings across the District. We will provide staff capacity to manage PPSD's 44 school buildings and provide energy management services. When PPSD returns to local management, the City will remain committed to performance-based contracting for facilities management and will leverage the City's Revolving Fund to maintain these investments in 21st century learning facilities. We will also develop a uniform energy management plan that benefits the City, PPSD, and Providence taxpayers and align with the City's GIS based asset management system for maintaining school yards, play areas, and outdoor classrooms.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT PHASE

This action plan summarizes the Administration's strategy to resume management of the school district. The plan emphasizes continued implementation of priorities of the Turnaround Action Plan, empowering a student outcomes focused approach to governance of PPSD, and streamlining systems and operations between the City and District as we together work to offer a high-quality and personalized public education to every student in Providence. The next phase of this work will be in accordance with RIDE Commissioner Infante-Green's February 2025 letter on next steps for the PPSD intervention that defines the development of a comprehensive transition plan in partnership with RIDE, PPSD, the Providence School Board, and the City Council with clear timelines and action steps. That transition plan will outline systems, structures, roles, and responsibilities for each entity, including the District, RIDE, School Board, City Council, and City, and outline a clear plan of action for PPSD's return to local management. The priority actions in this report serve as the Administration's foundation for this next stage of planning. Commissioner Infante-Greene's plan will be presented to the K-12 Council for review and approval in June 2025.

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE STATE INTERVENTION IN PPSD

In November 2019, the State of Rhode Island began its intervention in the Providence Public School District (PPSD) in response to the 2019 review of the school district by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education's Institute for Education Policy. This review prepared at the request of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) found:

- A low level of academic achievement at PPSD.
- A broken school culture.
- Health and physical safety concerns for both students and educators.
- Lack of support and agency for educators in their classrooms.
- Limited leadership and oversight for school leaders over their schools.
- A lack of family and caregiver engagement with the school district.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green, RIDE has implemented the State intervention since it first began. Through the negotiated terms of the State intervention, RIDE took over oversight and management of PPSD from the Providence School Board, the District's primary governing entity, as well as authorities of the Mayor of Providence and the Providence City Council over school-related matters, with the exception of facilities. During the State intervention, the City, RIDE, and PPSD continue to partner on implementation of the District's capital plan, with staff within the City's Department of Public Property serving as project managers for ongoing construction projects. The City of Providence is obligated to fund the PPSD budget throughout the intervention, although RIDE manages the District's budget, programming, and personnel.

As part of the State intervention in PPSD, RIDE convened Community Design Teams to develop the Turnaround Action Plan (TAP) that outlines priorities to guide the intervention. The Turnaround Action Plan elevates three pillars for the State intervention: engaged communities; excellence in learning; and world-class talent, supported by a foundational principle of efficient district systems. For each of these pillars, the Turnaround Action Plan identifies key metrics to evaluate progress during the state intervention. Many of these metrics focus on student achievement on the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) and there are additional metrics relating to family and caregiver engagement, school quality, and the educator workforce.

The State intervention in PPSD was implemented for an initial five-year term, which would have concluded in November 2024. In Summer 2024, RIDE evaluated the District's progress under the State intervention, culminating in reports by SchoolWorks and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Upon reviewing key findings, RIDE determined that PPSD has made some progress but has not yet achieved the goals outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan. In August 2024, the Rhode Island Council on Primary and Secondary Education approved RIDE Commissioner Infante-Green's recommendation to extend the State intervention in PPSD for up to three more years, through October 2027.

Since then, Commissioner Infante-Green has communicated on openness to returning the District sooner if the City meets a series of benchmarks and deliverables on the path to local control.

INTRODUCTION

PREPARING FOR THE RETURN OF PPSD TO LOCAL MANAGEMENT

Upon taking office, the Smiley Administration immediately began preparing for the City to manage the District again with a Community Conversation on Education in his first week in office. In Fall 2023, the Mayor convened the Return to Local Control Cabinet including 14 representatives from the Administration, the City Council, and the School Board to responsibly guide the strategy for preparing for the District's return.

When convened, the Cabinet played a critical role in defining the City's planning approach. The group collectively reviewed and submitted comments on RIDE's proposed regulations for implementing the Crowley Act which defined the criteria for ending the State intervention. Together the Cabinet studied the PPSD Turnaround Action Plan metrics and identified programs and strategies for the City and community members that would support PPSD in achieving key metrics even before the District returns to the City.

The Cabinet developed an integrated work plan to conduct deep and broad community engagement to inform the development of a transition plan for the District, engage the whole community in strategies to support the implementation of the Turnaround Action Plan, and develop a thorough internal systems and operations review in response to the challenges that triggered the State intervention.

As part of the City's internal technical review of the 2019 Johns Hopkins Review, each concern was mapped with status updates from the 2024 SchoolWorks Review and Harvard Graduate School of Education reports. This analysis allowed the City to understand the progress-to-date and to identify gaps that remain. The City convened an internal group of senior Administration staff across several departments to identify the pre-State intervention status, the current state, and a recommended future vision for when PPSD returns to local management.

As part of this analysis, the internal working group identified both immediate and long-term action items for each area relating to the return of PPSD to local control. Communications from RIDE Commissioner Infante-Green identified key areas of progress necessary for preparing for the District's transition back to the City. This plan integrates those action items, including proposed legislative or ordinance changes, programmatic priorities, and operations and governance strategies. Key partners in education, including educators, school-based leaders, families and caregivers, local education agency administrators, and education policy experts were invited to and participated in peer review of this report.

In the next phase of this work, the City will use this plan as a guide as the City, School Board, RIDE, and PPSD align systems and operations for the successful return of PPSD to local control through RIDE's Collaborative Stakeholder Working Group.

INTRODUCTION

PROGRESS ON THE TURNAROUND ACTION PLAN

As part of the City's workplan to prepare for PPSD's return to local management, the Return to Local Control Cabinet identified eight Turnaround Action Plan metrics the City can impact before the District returns to local management:

- Increase the number of PPSD schools that are rated 2-stars or higher (PPSD has since revised this goal to be 3-stars or higher).
- Increase the percentage of students who are meeting their MLL targets on the ACCESS assessment.
- Increase the percentage of students who are present 90% of the school year.
- Increase the number of parents and caregivers engaged with the District's formal community engagement structures.
- Increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations in 3rd Grade Math RICAS.
- Increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations in 3rd Grade ELA RICAS.
- Increase the percentage of PPSD students who graduate within four years.
- Increase the percentage of students who graduate with college credit, AP credit, or a CTE credential.

Elevating programs, partnerships, and resources for every member of the Providence community to help improve the District's performance on these metrics has been a priority of the City's community engagement strategy. These opportunities are available on the City's webpage about preparations for the return of PPSD to local control and shared at a wide range of community engagement events.

Since the Turnaround Action Plan was published in December 2020, the Rhode Island Department of Education has also shared quarterly updates on PPSD progress towards achieving the key metrics. Each quarterly report is available in multiple languages, including in Spanish, and may be found on the District website.

UPDATE



JANUARY 2025 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE TURNAROUND ACTION PLAN

Excellence in Learning

Implementing a high-quality district-wide curriculum for the Providence Public School District (PPSD) has been a leading priority of the State intervention. As of January 2025, the District has implemented high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Implementation of these HQIM was paired with professional development for educators, including for culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. There is a curriculum specifically for students who are multilingual learners and these students also receive English Language Development daily. There is a District-wide culture of and commitment to data-informed decision making, including for attendance; FAFSA completion; credit recovery; graduation rates; and standards-level proficiency.

In 2024, more than 40 percent of PPSD graduates had attained a credential in Career and Technical Education (CTE)—there are currently 29 CTE programs at the District, in partnership with community and university partners. The District continues its efforts to expand Advanced Academics. Advanced Academics programs have now expanded to all six PPSD middle schools and nearly 420 students were enrolled in Advanced Placement classes in the most recent academic year. In May 2024, there were more than 1,500 PPSD graduates, of which 100 graduates committed to entry-level positions at companies like Providence Water, General Dynamics, and Electric Boat.

Five new redesign schools opened for the 2024-2025 school year, including one middle school and four high schools. PPSD has more than doubled the capacity of its Pre-Kindergarten program from 417 seats in the 2020-2021 school year to 923 seats in the 2024-2025 school year. The District has also improved access to child outreach screenings, increasing the number of children screened by the Pre-K department by 18 percent.

Engaged Communities

PPSD has invested in programs like Parent University, as well as the Parent Leadership Academy, to better engage families, caregivers, and other partners in the District's communications and decision making. Advisory councils and school improvement teams have allowed students, families and caregivers, and community leaders to actively inform District policies and practices and to implement more partnerships at schools. To receive feedback from the community, the school district has introduced the District-Wide Advisory Council (DWAC) and the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). PPSD has also introduced Effectiff Language Translation and Interpretation Services, a live translation service that is available in more than 350 languages. There are also active efforts to improve student attendance, including the Attendance Heroes campaign.

World Class Talent

PPSD is committed to building an educator workforce that meets the diverse needs of students. The District has introduced certification reimbursement for educators working with students who are multilingual learners, as well as accelerated hiring and teacher pipeline programs. The number of educators certified in English as a Second Language increased from 17 to 36 percent. PPSD has also partnered with the Rhode Island Foundation to offer \$25,000 in loan forgiveness for teachers of color. The District reorganized its Human Resources Office to focus on strategic staffing and recruitment, as well as on more data-informed decision making. PPSD advanced its timeline for hiring and now starts hiring in March. In nearly 10 years, the District has doubled its percentage of new teachers of color from 15 percent in 2015 to 29 percent in 2024. PPSD has also offered professional development on the new district-wide curriculum and implemented job-embedded learning opportunities.

Efficient District Systems

PPSD remains committed to the capital plan that will ensure that every student learns in a new or like-new school by 2030, and both the District and the City have partnered to ensure that building projects are both completed on time and also meet the improvement targets. As part of the implementation of the capital plan, PPSD implemented the School Building Committee (SBC) to allow for more community participation in decision making on school facilities. School-based budgeting has allowed for more school-level decision making, with more than 40 percent of a school's budget at the discretion of the school leader. The District also implemented a performance-based maintenance contract for accountability and higher standards for cleaning and monitoring of repairs and maintenance. In collaboration with leaders at both the City and State, PPSD shortened the timeline for purchasing and procurement.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PRIORITY ACTIONS DURING TRANSITION OF PPSD TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Provide opportunities for the community to reflect on the City's preparation for the return of PPSD to local management and to maintain accountability on progress.
- Increase communications of out-of-classroom learning opportunities, particularly when partnered with Recreation and Human Services programming through designated staff and with community programs at public libraries and local advocacy groups, including youth advocacy groups.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Increase access, accountability, and information sharing across stakeholders through regular opportunities for community members, including students, families and caregivers, educators, school-based leaders, and community organizations to engage with the Mayor and Superintendent on education.
- Ensure adequate staffing in the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) office and expand the number of staff who are bilingual in both English and Spanish to support family and caregiver engagement, and determine the best staffing model for the FACE office in partnership with District leadership.
- Leverage the resources and programs of City departments serving youth, including the Department of Recreation and the Division of Human Services, to enhance Family and Community Engagement office initiatives.
- Collaborate among City teams, PPSD, school board members and school-based leaders to increase information sharing, provide more family and caregiver engagement opportunities with diverse membership, and support Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) to convene families and caregivers across the District.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- Families and caregivers did not feel connected to their children's schools—there were few initiatives and programs connecting families and caregivers to the schools their children attended.
- Families and caregivers found it difficult to advocate for their children's academic needs and wellbeing. Inconsistent communication further hampered poor connection between schools and parents.
- There were no parent-teacher conferences at the school-level, and it was difficult to obtain even an annual meeting with a classroom teacher. There was inconsistent communication across schools and parents felt that it was difficult to advocate for their children.
- Parents were concerned with lack of rigor, changing and misaligned curriculum, low expectations, and inequitable access within PPSD, noting the lack of expectations and even lack of homework assignments.
- There were challenges in staffing the Multilingual Learner Office (formerly known as the 'LEP Office'). In general, there were too few bilingual staff within PPSD.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- PPSD's Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) has developed a plan to engage families aligned with Turnaround Action Plan goals. Their primary goal is to increase the percentage of families with a favorable perception of being involved in their child's school.
- FACE initiatives include: Parent learning supports; district-wide advisory councils with students, parents, and community members; implementing responsive communication systems like Rapid Response and Let's Talk; and informational community sessions about special topics.
- District leaders and teachers invested in two language translation services (Lion Bridge for phone translation and Effectiff for in-person translation) to ensure that teachers and district staff can communicate with families and caregivers in the 40 native languages spoken within the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

In June 2024, the Return to Local Control Cabinet approved an engagement strategy to gather community perspectives on the state of education in Providence during the State intervention in PPSD and how the City and community can support PPSD in achieving the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan. The Cabinet developed a Return to Local Control Survey that asked community members a range of questions about how the District has managed operations and budget under the State intervention; where the City should prioritize efforts around improving metrics outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan; and how community members would like to become involved and support this work to deliver excellent education at PPSD and in each community.

In addition to the survey, the City hosted conversations on education so that community members could engage with one another and share their insights with decision makers. There were several forms of these community conversations, including two city-wide Mayor's Community Conversations on Education, three Youth Community Conversations on Education, and other Neighborhood Community Conversations on Education to engage organizations from libraries to faith groups. Five hundred eleven community members took part in one of these conversations. Through these conversations, it became clear that community members—especially students—feel decision makers at all levels fail to hear, understand, and act upon their concerns. Participants expressed a lack of understanding about different entities' (including PPSD, RIDE, the City, and the School Board) responsibilities and how the community can hold each one accountable.

This two-pronged approach to community engagement offered community members different avenues to get involved and allowed the City to best meet community members where they are. Promotion for the survey and community conversations included: Door-to-door literature drops; distribution of promotional bookmarks with a QR code linking to resources on how to become involved; notifications on the PVD311 system; digital ads on social media sites; posters and displays at City Hall and Providence Recreation Centers; and personalized and mass communications to over 200 community partners, faith leaders, and education-oriented non-profit organizations. The City heard from nearly 1,200 community voices on education through its engagement initiatives over the second half of 2024.

KEY THEMES LEARNED FROM ENGAGEMENT

The following themes summarize four of the main insights the City heard from the Providence community over the second half of 2024:

- **Frustration with the quality of education:** Community members are broadly frustrated with the quality of education in Providence, citing challenges such as misaligned curricula, inadequate funding, and insufficient support for both students and teachers.
- **Collaboration and engagement failures:** State intervention has led to confusion and distrust, with community members feeling that leaders are not effectively collaborating or providing clear pathways for involvement.
- **Feeling unheard:** Community members, especially students, feel their concerns are ignored by decisionmakers, leading to a deep sense of frustration and a loss of trust.
- **Hope for a brighter future after returning to local control:** Despite the challenges, there is optimism for local control, with families and students hoping for greater opportunities to influence school decisions and increased autonomy at the school level.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RETURN TO LOCAL CONTROL SURVEY

Over six months, the Return to Local Control Survey collected responses from 668 community members, with considerable geographic and racial/ethnic diversity: Members from every Providence zip code completed the questionnaire, and 41 percent of respondents identified as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color.

Major themes from the survey included:

- The vast majority of community members want to see schools returned to local control right away (42 percent) or in the near future (45 percent); very few (10 percent) want to see the State continue to manage the schools for the foreseeable future.
- A majority of community members (58 percent) feel schools have moved in the wrong direction under the last five years of State intervention. Just 17 percent believe schools have moved in the right direction since 2019.
- Community members believe PPSD has made poor management and budgeting decisions during State management to achieve the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan. Fifty-one percent feel PPSD has the wrong budget priorities, compared with only 12 percent who approve of those choices. Less than 15 percent of survey respondents said PPSD excellently offers key services (increasing social and behavioral support for students; expanding special education services; increasing programs for multilingual learners; and expanding college readiness), whereas three times as many said PPSD offers those services poorly. Majorities said that PPSD has made little or no progress on the five promises made in the Turnaround Action Plan.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON EDUCATION

The City hosted 12 community conversations on education during the second half of 2024. These conversations took many forms—in person and online, large and small groups—in order to give communities different ways to share their perspectives around public schools. Two Mayor’s Community Conversations on Education brought 216 youth, families, teachers, and community partners together from across the city. City leadership, including the Mayor, City Council, and School Board, as well as representatives from the District and RIDE also joined and participated in these Community Conversations. The first event centered on where schools have made progress and fallen short on eight key Turnaround Action Plan (TAP) metrics during the State intervention in PPSD. Community members focused on four topics related to those key TAP metrics: School Quality, Family and Caregiver Engagement, Test Scores, and Attendance and Graduation. The second event built off of the first conversation by discussing ways the City and community can collaborate to make progress on those metrics. Discussion groups at the second event included: Academic Success, Quality of Life, Attendance, and Multilingual Learners.

Neighborhood and Youth Community Conversations on Education focused on similar themes, with the following three key questions:

- How have schools fared since the start of the State intervention?
- How can schools improve under City management?
- Where can the community and City work together to better student outcomes, especially along the eight key TAP metrics identified by the Return to Local Control Cabinet?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH OUTREACH

The City coordinated with youth organizations like the OurSchoolsPVD Alliance, Rhode Island for Community and Justice, and the Smith Hill Library to find other spaces to hear youth voices. The City worked with these organizations and provided small grants to support their own Youth Community Conversations on Education. More than 130 middle and high school students discussed how schools are serving them under the State intervention. Some key insights the City heard from youth include: Distress about the hazardous state of school facilities; perceptions of poor District leadership; insufficient academic and emotional support from educators and school leaders; difficulty attending school, especially due to transportation; and inadequate curricular and educator diversity.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

The City also conducts an annual public opinion poll of Providence residents. Responses from the community satisfaction survey mirrored the community engagement results in expressing the concerns of residents. A full 60 percent of community members were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the quality of public education in Providence. Only 18 percent of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the general management of PPSD, whereas 61 percent were very or somewhat dissatisfied. Community members were similarly uneasy about the level of funding for PPSD (25 percent satisfied, 50 percent dissatisfied).

CURRENT AND FUTURE STATE OF FAMILY AND CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

PPSD's Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) leads community engagement for the District—including both families and the community in the office's name acknowledges how our youth are supported by a community of adult guardians and mentors.

During community engagement, the City heard that these relationships between the District and families and caregivers lack depth because families and caregivers do not trust or understand the public school system. Many caregivers lack sufficient knowledge about their rights—especially regarding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). While the FACE office has recently offered more opportunities to learn about these rights, as well as programming around equity and belonging, families and caregivers have difficulty learning about them.

When families manage to organize through groups like Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), many focus on conversations on shared experiences rather than on how to make real change. Others, like past lessons in Parent University, may feel patronizing by teaching families and caregivers how to parent rather than working collaboratively with school leadership around human development.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Under local management of PPSD, family and caregiver engagement must be inclusive, widely promoted, and demonstrably meaningful to attendees. As the City prepares for the return of the District to local management, Community Conversations on Education will discuss what the school community—both students and families and caregivers—desire in the District’s outreach and engagement with the greater school community and what is most meaningful to them. The City will support PPSD in mapping the District’s current initiatives for family and caregiver engagement. This will help align the District’s engagement with priorities for and the needs of PPSD families and caregivers. While the FACE office will lead efforts for family and caregiver engagement, this work should be supported by other City departments that serve youth, including the Department of Recreation and the Division of Human Services, in order to build a strong community of support for our students and their learning.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARDS AND ASSOCIATION OF PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

When PPSD returns to local management, families, students, and community organizations hope to have more opportunities to influence key school decisions through School Board and City leadership. Community members have made clear how important it is that the City take their voices into account in its future planning. Youth seek spaces where they can be an active part in decision making—especially through more student involvement in governance. Community members are especially excited about more school-level decision making with greater autonomy for students and teachers. Local control can offer educators and parents new pathways for collaboration and innovation to best serve all students’ needs.

Community members will have regular opportunities to engage with the Mayor and Superintendent on education when the District returns to local management. This will help increase access, accountability, and information sharing across stakeholders, including, but not limited to: Students, families, teachers, school administrators, School Board members, City Council members, and community organizations. Additionally, the City will work with the FACE office to ensure that each PPSD school provides meaningful opportunities for all families and caregivers to engage with and become involved in their child’s school. Priorities for these engagement opportunities and organizations may include clear roles and expectations, diverse membership, regular opportunities for families and caregivers to share feedback, regular communications about school initiatives, and an emphasis on action plans and implementation. To better communicate school-level concerns with the District and City, we will explore supporting an association of Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) that convenes PTOs from across the District to further support family and caregiver engagement and provide information on city resources.

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY EXPERTISE ON EDUCATION

When PPSD returns to local control, the Mayor will continue to engage local experts and community leaders on topics relating to and impacting education and youth. These experts and leaders will include educators and school-based leaders, as well as individuals who are knowledgeable on topics relating to education and youth. These individuals will offer the Mayor rich, in-depth expertise on education and youth that is also responsive to current events and the evolving needs of PPSD students, families, and caregivers.



SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Continue promoting resources and programs to support PPSD in achieving the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan.
- Assess data on PPSD's progress toward the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan relating to learning and identify remaining gaps that could be supported through City programs.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Support the Superintendent in continued implementation of the Turnaround Action Plan (TAP) and priorities relating to supporting students who are multilingual learners and students receiving special education services; universal Pre-K; supporting learning and achievement in middle school; and ensuring that students are prepared for post-secondary success.
- Support the Superintendent and their leadership team in communicating progress on the TAP and other metrics outside of quarterly reports.
- Take the lead of the Superintendent and academic experts in determining priorities for academic supports, interventions, and all high-quality instructional materials.
- Prioritize academic and social-emotional learning, including for multilingual learners and for students receiving special education services and behavioral health support.
- Facilitate partnership and coordination amongst elementary schools within the District so educators may share best practices on learning to help increase the number of PPSD elementary schools with high achievement on RICAS math and ELA.
- Partner with the Superintendent and school-based leaders to implement best practices for Pre-K through 8 schools to improve student learning and outcomes in middle school, including using sixth grade as a transition year and offering rich academic programming and leadership and enrichment opportunities in middle school.
- Increase out-of-school time learning for students through both after-school and summer programming.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- Trends indicated a steep decline in proficiency on RICAS math and English Language Arts (ELA) between 3rd grade and 8th grade.
- There were concerns about the low level of academic instruction and curriculum alignment, especially at middle and high schools. The absence of a standard curriculum was a concern due to high student mobility.
- There was insufficient funding for students who are multilingual learners. The historic level of funding for multilingual learners from the State was inadequate and the State only recently supplied PPSD with funding for these students.
- There was lack of support for students receiving special education services. Many students moved to the next grade level unprepared. Half of students receiving special education services entered middle school with failing grades.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- PPSD implemented interventions to improve scores on standardized state assessments. This includes high-quality instructional materials for ELA and math. PPSD also now offers before- and after-school tutoring programs and Saturday Academies; field trips that extend learning in ELA, math, and science; and Parent RICAS Nights.
- By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, all schools would have fully adopted district-wide high-quality instructional materials for ELA and math, with implementation training in all grade levels.
- PPSD introduced Professional Learning Communities focused on multilanguage student support and added seats to the dual language program. PPSD implemented interventions to improve scores on standardized state assessments and increased the number of multilingual learners in advanced academic courses.
- PPSD purchased high-quality programs (e.g., Lexia, Wilson, etc.) and re-established the Special Education Parent Local Advisory Committee to better support students who receive special education services.

As we plan for the return of PPSD to local management, the City of Providence remains committed to the vision outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan—to create a model public school system where every student may receive a world-class education. Implementing the four pillars of engaged communities; excellence in learning; world-class talent; and efficient district systems lies at the core of this work. In addition, the City is committed to investing in family and caregiver engagement and building after-school and summer programming to create a model of education that supports our children and youth’s learning and development outside of the traditional school day and school year.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

CURRENT STATE OF LEARNING

During the State intervention, the City continues to support programs, partnerships, and resources that align with each priority of the Turnaround Action Plan, including: Engaged communities, excellence in learning, world-class talent, and efficient district systems. Programming includes academic support, behavioral health, community participation, family support and childcare, mentoring and career and technical education, and recreation. These opportunities are shared on the City’s website. These programs, partnerships, and resources demonstrate how both City and community programs support a world-class education—complementing and further enriching the instruction students receive at our public schools. A world-class education extends beyond the traditional school day and school year and includes opportunities for academic learning and for personal development and social-emotional learning through enrichment in the arts and athletics and engagement with community organizations.

City programs supporting progress on Turnaround Action Plan metrics include after-school homework help and tutoring programs at Recreation Centers, as well as reading and mentoring programs based at these Centers. Local organizations like AS220 offer multidisciplinary arts programming for youth and non-profit organizations like Mentor Rhode Island and Young Voices offer mentoring and leadership programs for Providence youth.

FUTURE STATE OF LEARNING AND CURRICULUM

As the City plans for the return of the District to local control, the City has identified the following as priorities for learning at PPSD. These priorities are identified in the Turnaround Action Plan developed in response to community engagement and were elevated by students, educators, and families and caregivers during the City’s community engagement on education. When PPSD returns to local management, the City and School Board will support the Superintendent and District leadership team with a vision to implement these priorities at our schools:

- **Supporting Multilingual Learners:** The City is advocating for increased designated funding for multilingual learners in the Governor’s budget for fiscal year 2026, particularly as students achieve proficiency. The District has been a leader in requiring MLL certification for our educators and will maintain this requirement when PPSD returns to local management. When PPSD returns to local control, the City will work with the Superintendent to increase the number of dual language teachers, including the number of educators who are native Spanish speakers from countries that are represented in PPSD’s student body. Additional priorities will include strategies such as assessing the number of educators who work with multilingual learners and determining whether these educators have the appropriate certification and also partnering with District leadership to identify the highest quality and most efficient certification pathways for educators with certifications in other subject areas to complete their MLL certification. In addition, the City will support the District in creating a professional learning community of educators on meeting the unique needs of multilingual learners attending PPSD. The City will also support ongoing professional development on engaging multilingual learners and their families and caregivers for all District staff, including educators, school staff, and central office. We will also work with PPSD to provide resources for families and caregivers in multiple languages, especially in Spanish.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

- **Supporting Students Receiving Special Education Services:** In the 2025 Legislative Session, the City is partnering with Rhode Island state legislators to increase State education funding for special education services. When the District returns to local management, the City is committed to offering high-quality, in-district special education programs that meet the needs of all of our students so they may learn with peers from their neighborhood and home city. The City will support the Superintendent in identifying the best model to deliver special education services for our students, as well as the number of intervention personnel needed to implement this model while also focusing student caseloads and increasing student achievement. These priorities will require additional educators with certification in special education at the District—the City will engage local universities in conversations on strategies to increase the number of educators with this certification and encourage new graduates to teach at the District.
- **Universal Pre-K:** The City is committed to building PPSD’s early education program to offer high-quality Pre-K across Providence. We continue to advocate for continued expansion of RI Pre-K for four-year old children across Providence through the current mixed-delivery model, as well as for an RI Pre-K funding formula that benefits an urban core city like Providence. The City will continue to advocate for the expansion of the District’s Integrated Pre-K program to full-day Pre-K for three-year-old children and will support PPSD’s Early Childhood team in increasing the quality of early education programs through the BrightStars childcare and education quality rating system. Additionally, we will continue to support PPSD’s Early Childhood team in their ongoing Child Outreach Screenings for three and four-year old children who reside in Providence. These screenings provide families with information on their child’s development.
- **Supporting Student Learning and Achievement in Middle School:** There is a notable decline in student achievement on standardized assessments like the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) beginning in third grade and continuing into middle school. PPSD’s capital plan will introduce Pre-K through 8 schools across the District, removing the transition from elementary to middle school. This will allow students to continue with the same learning community of peers and educators from early childhood through middle school. The City will support best practices to improve student outcomes and increase student achievement in the Pre-K through 8 model, especially in the middle school years. In partnership with the Superintendent, District leadership, and school-based leaders, the City is committed to creating a safe and nurturing school culture where students in grades Pre-K through 8 are excited to come to school every day and learn. Priorities for implementation of the Pre-K through 8 model include more directed support and learning from a team of educators who work with each middle school grade—providing more opportunities for both students and educators in middle school to learn about each other—and after-school programming that allows students to practice, develop, and hone skills they learned during the school day.
- **Ensuring that Students are Prepared for Post-Secondary Success:** When PPSD returns to local management, the City is committed to building a network of guidance counselors and college advisors to engage high school students in conversations about the various post-secondary opportunities. This may include bringing back the role of middle school culture coordinators and partnerships with community organizations already pursuing this work. These post-secondary opportunities include college; career and technical education; and employment. PPSD has expanded its career and technical education (CTE) programs since the State intervention began in 2019. The City will continue to support CTE programming that aligns with student interest and also addresses key workforce needs both within Providence and across Rhode Island, including in education and especially early education; clean energy; and healthcare. In addition to offering and increasing awareness of CTE

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

programs more equitably across PPSD high schools, we will also better communicate and offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses across our high schools.

- **Prioritizing Support for Multilingual Learners and Students Receiving Special Education Services and Behavioral Health Support:** The City’s community engagement found that few community members feel that PPSD is offering excellent services to expand college readiness, to increase programs for multilingual learners, to expand special education services, and to increase social and behavioral support for students. Continuing to offer these services excellently will be a priority when the District returns to local management. To support multilingual learners, the City will partner with District leadership to implement strategies such as ensuring that students have an educator with MLL certification and prioritizing school-based counselors to work with these students and out-of-school time programming designed for multilingual learners. For students receiving special education services, the District will prioritize strategies such as extra learning time, clearly delineated roles for content and special educators and paraprofessionals in student learning, and building high-quality, in-district special education programs. To support the delivery of behavioral health services at PPSD, the City will partner with the Superintendent to build the District’s capacity to increase the number school counselors and school psychologists; integrate social-emotional learning into curricula; and partner with community organizations already working in behavioral health, as well as the City’s Division of Human Services that leads the City’s behavioral health initiatives.

FUNDING HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING AT PPSD

When PPSD returns to local control, the City will support the Superintendent in allocating resources aligned with these priorities, as well as with continued implementation of the Turnaround Action Plan. This will include consideration of the structure of the District’s central office and streamlining technology, software, and services that may be duplicative. At the school level, the City will support PPSD’s ongoing efforts to develop an inventory system for curricula and textbooks and other school-based resources and supplies.

RESOURCE MAPPING OF INVESTMENTS IN LEARNING AND CURRICULUM

As the City, School Board, RIDE, and PPSD jointly develop a transition plan for the District’s return, we will engage in a resource mapping and data evaluation exercise to identify progress on these priority areas and the gaps that remain. The 2024 SchoolWorks Report describes PPSD’s implementation of new district-wide curricula, interventions for students, and professional support for educators relating to these priorities. The City’s ongoing community engagement on public education in Providence will provide important perspectives from both students and educators on the current state of these priorities at PPSD. Together, this data and resource mapping will allow the City, PPSD, the School Board, and RIDE to assess the impact of these investments and to identify areas for continued improvement and gaps that remain. When the District returns to local management, the Superintendent will provide the expertise in—as well as a clear vision for—continued implementation of effective programs for these priorities.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRE-K THROUGH 8 MODEL

PPSD’s capital plan is facilitating the transition to the Pre-K through 8 model across the District—allowing students to be part of the same learning community and with the same peers and educators from Pre-K through eighth grade. In Fall 2025, Harry Kizirian and Frank D. Spaziano Elementary Schools will be the first schools to adopt the Pre-K through 8 model, with each school adding a sixth-grade class, with seventh- and eighth-grade classes added in subsequent years. When the District returns to local control, the City will follow and implement best practices to operate Pre-K through 8 schools. This includes both District and school-based leadership structures and collaboration amongst educators to ensure better outcomes for our students.

The City will support PPSD leadership in implementing their vision for Pre-K through 8 education at the District. We will continue to use student achievement on the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) to monitor the performance of the District as a whole, as well as of individual schools on math and English Language Arts (ELA). Analyses of 2023-2024 RICAS achievement show a clear trend that PPSD elementary students demonstrate high achievement on RICAS math and ELA, with more than 50 percent of students meeting or exceeding expectations at most elementary schools, which is comparable to RICAS achievement at a Barrington upper elementary school in the same academic year.

The Pre-K through 8 model provides an opportunity to continue this achievement in elementary grades, including through more school-based supports in kindergarten through second grade, so that our students enter third grade with strong foundational skills in reading and math. Educators at elementary schools across the District may share best practices for student learning so that all PPSD elementary schools will have more than 50 percent of students meeting or exceeding expectations on RICAS math and ELA. In the Pre-K through 8 model, students’ continuity with the same learning community and in the same school building will help improve student outcomes and increase student achievement in middle school.

Research indicates that one of the key strengths of the Pre-K through 8 model is that this approach allows middle school academic interventions to be implemented with much more fidelity than in traditional middle schools that serve students in grades six through eight. Since students continue with the same peers and school community, schools may adopt the structure of elementary school, including having just one or two classroom teachers who know students and families and caregivers and hold themselves accountable to meeting each student’s individual learning needs, in the middle school grades, especially in sixth grade.

When PPSD returns to local control, the City’s priorities to help improve student outcomes in middle school include:

- **Sixth Grade as a Transition Year:** The transition from smaller elementary schools to larger middle schools contributes to the decline in student achievement in middle school—the Pre-K through 8 model eliminates this transition. School leaders and educators at Pre-K through 8 schools may use sixth grade as a transition year—students may still have recess and have a subset of self-contained classes with the same teacher and same group of peers, but they will also have some content-based classes with different teachers and different classmates for some subjects. For example, rather than a single classroom teacher like in elementary school, students in sixth grade may have two educators. In this transition year, educators may also introduce new academic and behavioral standards so students may

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

transition from task-based learning that emphasizes effort and improvement in elementary school to performance-based learning that emphasizes grades and test scores in middle and high school.

- **Rich Academic Offerings for Middle School Students:** The City is committed to offering rich and advanced academic courses for middle school students through the Pre-K through 8 model. This includes courses like pre-algebra and algebra, as well as world language classes and units on world history and engineering and technology in required courses in order to be responsive to students' academic interests. Students will be able to explore various subject areas in middle school so that they may identify a high school program that best matches and supports their academic interests and goals.
- **Leadership and Enrichment Opportunities in Middle School Years:** After continuing with the same learning community since Pre-K, students in grades seven and eight may serve as peer leaders, tutors, and mentors for students in grades Pre-K through six. Clubs and after-school enrichment programs are integral to the high school years and the Pre-K through 8 model allows students to explore these activities in middle school. In addition to classes in art, music, and physical education, enrichment programs may include clubs for newspaper, art, drama, film, band, and engineering and technology.
- **Leadership and Enrichment Opportunities in Middle School Years:** After continuing with the same learning community since Pre-K, students in grades seven and eight may serve as peer leaders, tutors, and mentors for students in grades Pre-K through 6. Clubs and after-school enrichment programs are integral to the high school years and the Pre-K through 8 model allows students to explore these activities in middle school. In addition to classes in art, music, and physical education, enrichment programs may include clubs for newspaper, art, drama, film, band, and engineering and technology.
- **Expand Teaming Amongst Educators:** In teaming, educators teach one to two related subjects to the same cohort of students. For example, one educator may teach math and science and another educator may teach English and social studies. This will ease students' transition from self-contained classes with one class teacher to content-based classrooms with a new teacher for each subject. Teaming also allows educators to identify and discuss students' strengths and weaknesses and to adjust their lesson plans accordingly. Additionally, in teaming, educators work with students across grades six through eight; this allows them to plan lessons that build upon skills from previous grades and offers educators an opportunity to connect topics and lessons across subjects.
- **Professional Development on Performance-Based Learning for Educators:** Like students, educators must also transition from task-oriented to performance-based learning from elementary to middle school in the Pre-K through 8 model. The City will support professional development to help educators introduce some performance-based learning in grades four and five. This experience with performance-based learning before they start sixth grade will facilitate students' transition to middle school. Additionally, we will partner with PPSD leadership to introduce test-taking skills into daily and weekly curricula to improve RICAS and performance-based task scores in middle school.
- **Professional Development for Engaging Students from Pre-K through Eighth Grade:** Since students in grades Pre-K through eight will be in the same school building, all school staff, including educators, school leaders, and both support and office staff, must be trained on engaging students across these grade levels. Staff must be aware of the physical and

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT PPSD

social-emotional developmental stage at each grade and be comfortable directing students to the appropriate resources and also managing bullying, violence, and substance use in the middle school years.

SUPPORTING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMMING

Supporting After-School Programming at PPSD

The City is committed to offering engaging after-school and summer programming for our children and youth when the District returns to local control. There is strong evidence that after-school programs that are aligned with school curricula offer students an opportunity to practice and receive feedback on concepts covered during the school day—and ultimately are associated with higher academic achievement and deeper engagement in learning, in addition to higher school attendance and lower drop-out rates. After-school programming that balances academics and enrichment will allow students to review and practice material they learned during the school day and explore hobbies and sports. These programs also fill in gaps in students' home-based support for their learning and academic achievement.

During the State intervention, District-based after-school programs continue to be planned and operated by PPSD and community partners. In addition to these programs, the City and Providence After School Alliance have partnered to deliver high-quality out-of-school programs that provide targeted—student-specific—and data-driven academic support at two PPSD middle schools through Governor McKee's Learn365 initiative. When PPSD returns to local management, we will prioritize continued investments in after-school programming that aligns with school curricula, balances academic programming and enrichment, allows for meaningful, positive relationships between youth and program staff; and offers ongoing professional development and training to staff. Continuous collection of data and evaluation of student outcomes will allow both the City and District to assess program outcomes and allocate funding and other resources to the most impactful after-school programs. When the District returns to local control, the City sees a need for a coordinated approach to after-school programming to support the operations and logistics of this programming, including transportation, quality and training, and program evaluation.

Supporting City-Wide Summer Programming

There is strong evidence that students experience learning loss during the summer months and that this summer learning loss is more significant in students attending urban school districts—the City's Eat Play Learn initiative aims to address summer learning loss. Eat Play Learn includes summer learning programming led by both the District and District partners within schools, as well as City-wide initiatives for youth workforce development, sports and day camps, summer community meals, and opportunities to play and engage with the community at parks and waterparks across the City.

Eat Play Learn has remained a partnership between the City and District during the State intervention and both entities jointly reviewed proposals for summer learning programs and youth workforce development opportunities for Summer 2025. This year, the City and District have also been awarded technical assistance through the Bloomberg Cities Idea Exchange to identify strategies to improve student enrollment and attendance and professional development for summer educators at PPSD summer learning programs. This partnership and collaboration between the City and District will continue when PPSD returns to local management. We will prioritize research-backed summer approaches (such as those supported by the District Summer Learning Network) and programming that aligns with the District's academic goals for students in each division.



GOVERNANCE

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Collaborate with the School Board to support a student outcomes focused approach to governance.
- Develop and implement professional development training and onboarding modules for School Board members in partnership with RIDE and PPSD that are responsive to needs.
- Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities for the governing bodies (the Administration, the School Board, the City Council, and the Superintendent) for when the District returns to local control and rebuild trust across entities before the end of the transition.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Work with the School Board, PPSD, and RIDE to ensure that the District is on-track to achieve the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan.
- Support a District leadership team that will continue implementation of the priorities in the Turnaround Action Plan.
- Provide support to update the School Board's bylaws to reflect the Board's current composition.
- Restore adequate staffing of the School Board to ensure that they have the administrative, research, and organizational capacity to remain effective.

GOVERNANCE

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- Before the State intervention, PPSD governance came from multiple individuals and institutions with overlapping responsibilities. There were too many stakeholders with power over the District including the School Board, City Council, and the City of Providence.
- Governance lacked clear delineations of authority, responsibility, and accountability. There were concerns that the overlapping networks of authority related to the lack of vision.
- Priorities across PPSD stakeholders were not aligned and there was micromanagement of initiatives through bureaucracy and budget limits. All parties wanted to maintain control over the District.
- Trust was hard to build because RIDE's role in supporting the District was unclear. RIDE had a history of hiding failures, limiting outside interference, and not following through—as well as withholding important information from the State Board of Education.
- RIDE's unwillingness to have conversations about equity and diversity had consequences for PPSD. Furthermore, RIDE did not concern itself with facilities problems, such as lead abatement funding.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- In November 2023, the Mayor's Office established a Return to Local Control Cabinet to assess capacity and prepare for increased operational alignment. The Cabinet's work is focused on how to effectively align major services such as operations, finance, procurement, and human capital. This process also includes analyzing the City's current state and assessing future readiness with respect to its fiscal, legal, and operational role in supporting PPSD.
- Given the advisory role of the School Board throughout the State intervention in PPSD, the School Board has engaged the public in regular meetings, approved the District's contracts, and engaged with District leaders on PPSD's budget. The School Board has not yet been engaged in the development of a governance model to prepare to return the District to local control, and they lacked a shared vision of governance for the District.
- The Mayor's Office created and disseminated a School Board Candidate Guide for the November 2024 School Board elections. The Mayor's Office is also implementing a training for both elected and appointed School Board members.

GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE OF PPSD: PREVIOUS, CURRENT, AND FUTURE STATES

Governance of Providence Public School District includes the entities, processes, and policies that manage the public school district. Under the State intervention, the Rhode Island Department of Education has been the main governing entity. When the District returns to the City of Providence's management, there will be three main governing entities: the School Board, the Administration, and the City Council. Governing documents include the City of Providence Charter and municipal code, and the Providence School Board bylaws establishing the structure, powers, and responsibilities of each entity. In addition to local laws, federal and state law guide the education system as a whole. Federal education laws include the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Rhode Island state education laws include regulations on educator certification and the education of children with disabilities.

Responsible and strategic governance, with clearly defined duties and responsibilities for the three City entities, will help set both practical and aspirational goals to improve educational outcomes for all PPSD students. This will also allow for more efficient governance and alignment toward high-quality public education in Providence.

The School Board, City Council, and the Administration have distinct governance roles and responsibilities for the management of PPSD. Each section below includes an overview of each entity's role in PPSD governance before the 2019 State intervention, current roles under the State intervention, and the entity's role in future governance of PPSD.

SCHOOL BOARD

Pre-2019 State Intervention State

Before the 2019 state intervention in PPSD, the School Board was the main governing entity over PPSD and PPSD complied with their requests. At the time, the nine School Board members were appointed by the Mayor of Providence for three-year terms. Members were accountable to the Mayor, as well as to the community. The former School Board's duties included approving contracts, reviewing personnel matters as needed, overseeing District budget and operations, and also serving as a forum for students and families to share their thoughts on and experiences with the District and its governing entities. The School Board also appointed the Superintendent. School Board sub-committees, especially the policy, finance, and health and wellness subcommittees, were noted as key strengths in the 2019 Johns Hopkins Review.

Current State

During the State intervention, the School Board has remained a forum and space for students and families to share their thoughts and experiences at PPSD and also participates in the Return to Local Control Cabinet. The School Board has not had budget authority over the District and has not appointed a District Superintendent since the State intervention began in 2019. However, the School Board has continued its work on policy development, for example supporting an ordinance that requires the City of Providence to interview job applicants who are alumni of PPSD.

School Board Elections: In November 2022, Providence voters approved a hybrid model for the Providence School Board to include five elected and five appointed members. Given that November 2024 was the first School Board election, the City hosted informational sessions about running for office in Providence and developed a candidate guide to help raise awareness about the election and provide information about the candidates. This guide was published on the City's website during the 2024 election cycle.

GOVERNANCE

School Board Appointment and Selection Process: Following the General Election on November 5, 2024, the City of Providence launched an online form for community members to apply to be appointed to one of the five Mayoral appointments to the Providence School Board. There were five Mayoral appointments in total, with one appointment from each of the five electoral regions. The Providence School Board Nominating Committee accepted applications from November 8 through December 13, 2024.

Applications were reviewed by the School Board Nominating Committee and applicants were asked to participate in a public forum on December 18, 2024. During the public forum, community members submitted questions in advance to help guide the moderated discussion. The Committee reviewed applications from candidates who submitted an application and participated in the public forum and recommended candidates for Mayor Smiley to interview. Mayor Smiley held individual interviews with each recommended candidate and submitted five School Board nominees to the City Council for approval. These most recent School Board mayoral appointments balanced the skill set of the Board and aimed to bring expertise in key education priority areas, including early education and workforce development. These School Board nominees were approved by the City Council and officially sworn in by the Mayor on February 6, 2025.

Since January 2025, the Providence School Board has consisted of five appointed members and five elected members, one from each of the five School Board regions. Elected members are non-partisan and will serve a four-year term. In the new hybrid model, the initial five members appointed by the Mayor are subject to City Council confirmation and serve terms of varying length from one to three years.

School Board Professional Development and Learning: Effective onboarding and continuing professional development opportunities are essential to the success of the new Providence School Board. The City, PPSD, and RIDE collaborated on an onboarding and professional development program centered on student outcomes focused governance, designed to prepare new School Board members for success, while providing the necessary tools and resources to govern effectively.

The City, RIDE, and PPSD partnered with the Council of Great City Schools to promote a shared vision for student outcomes focused governance of the School Board. The School Board Professional Development and onboarding aims to ensure that new School Board members have shared foundational knowledge on the topics related to governance of the District. The series included an introductory two-day orientation session centered on student outcomes focused governance.

Additional onboarding trainings have included ethics, the Turnaround Action Plan, PPSD and City budgets, and will include other topics as needed.



GOVERNANCE

Since the School Board now follows a hybrid model, both elected and appointed School Board members will be accountable to the full school community, including students, families and caregivers, educators, school-based leaders, and school staff, community members, and advocates. School Board members will also remain accountable to the City Council and Mayor. There will be a regular collaboration between School Board members, the Mayor, and Administration staff.

Future State following Return to Local Control

When PPSD returns to local management, the School Board will be the leading governing entity over the District. Their duties will include oversight of the Superintendent, finance and operations for PPSD, as well as serving as a community engagement forum for both students and families. The School Board will continue its work on sub-committees including policy, finance, health and wellness, and career and technical education (CTE). The City, PPSD, and RIDE will continue to partner on providing professional learning and development support to the Providence School Board for a student outcomes focused approach to governance of the District and provide adequate staffing for the School Board so they have the administrative, research, and organizational capacity to remain effective.

CITY COUNCIL

Pre-2019 State Intervention State

Before the State intervention in PPSD, the City Council had a general oversight role over PPSD. Their duties included reviewing and approving School Board appointments from the Mayor, approving contracts according to regulations outlined in Providence's Home Rule Charter, reviewing the District's budget as part of the Finance Committee's review of the city budget and receiving regular updates on the School Board from other governing entities. The municipal code also describes the City Council's responsibility to determine the salary of chartered positions, including for School Board members.

Current State

Currently, the City Council exercises authority over PPSD by approving the City's annual budget, including the amount of funding that is appropriated to PPSD. The City Council participates in the Return to Local Control Cabinet to set the direction for preparing for the District's return.

Future State following Return to Local Control

When PPSD returns to local management, the City Council will reinstate their oversight of PPSD, including approving contracts according to regulations outlined in Providence's Home Rule Charter. The City Council will determine the salary of chartered positions, including for School Board members, and approve PPSD's budget. The City Council should also receive regular updates on PPSD, the budget, and the School Board.

ADMINISTRATION

Pre-2019 State Intervention State

Before the State intervention in PPSD, the Mayor's Office coordinated the various PPSD governing entities. The Mayor appointed all nine members of the School Board and PPSD's Superintendent was a member of the Mayor's senior leadership team and met weekly with the Mayor. Prior to the State intervention, the Mayor's Office coordinated grant opportunities with the District, supported out-of-classroom learning opportunities, provided operational and logistical support as needed, and staff from the District regularly attended working groups with City staff related to community engagement, communications, funding opportunities, and summer learning.

GOVERNANCE

Current State

Currently, under the State intervention, the Administration provides leadership to prepare the City and engage the community for the District's return to local control. The Administration allocates funding for PPSD in the City's annual budget. In the 2025 fiscal year, the City increased funding to PPSD by \$16.5 million to a total of \$146.5 million following the November 2024 settlement agreement with RIDE. The Mayor does not meet with the current Superintendent in any formalized way. The Mayor appoints five of the members of the School Board.

Future State following Return to Local Control

When PPSD returns to local management, the City will reinstate its partnership with the Superintendent. The Superintendent will be a member of the Mayor's senior leadership within the Administration, and will meet regularly with the Mayor and fellow senior Administration staff.

The Superintendent will serve as the leader and champion of the District, and will develop and lead implementation of a long-term vision for PPSD to offer excellent public education. This vision for the District will be developed in partnership with and approved by the School Board and Mayor. The Mayor's Office will continue to support PPSD in implementing the Turnaround Action Plan, facility planning, and other areas through all relevant City departments.

In addition to working closely with the Superintendent, the Mayor will meet with School Board members regularly. Administration staff will hold regular meetings with School Board members.

PPSD SUPERINTENDENT

Pre-2019 State Intervention State

Before the State intervention in PPSD, the Superintendent served as the champion of the District and implemented their vision for schools in partnership with the School Board and Mayor. The Superintendent built and managed a District leadership structure that prioritized both teaching and learning, including both math and English Language Arts (ELA), and school operations across the three divisions: elementary, middle, and high school.

The Superintendent directly reported to the School Board appointed by the Mayor and was a member of the Mayor's senior leadership team and met regularly with the Mayor and fellow senior staff.

Current State

During the State intervention, the Superintendent remains the champion of the District and manages the District leadership team.

The Superintendent reports to the RIDE Commissioner.

Future State following Return to Local Control

When PPSD returns to local control, the Superintendent will oversee a District leadership team to continue implementation of the Turnaround Action Plan in order to offer a world-class public education here in Providence. The District leadership team will prioritize both teaching and learning and District operations, as well as targeted support for school-based leaders across divisions, including elementary, middle, and high school, as well as Pre-K through 8. The City will support PPSD leadership in creating a culture where decisions and changes at central office are communicated with school-based leaders and where school-based leaders may readily reach District leadership. This includes sharing and regularly updating contact information for central office staff assigned to support functions like purchasing and personnel management.

GOVERNANCE

The Superintendent will serve as a member of the Mayor’s senior leadership and meet regularly with the Mayor and fellow senior staff.

REGULAR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MAYOR, SCHOOL BOARD, CITY COUNCIL, PPSD AND RIDE

Commissioner Infante-Green has established a Collaborative Stakeholder Working Group including representatives from RIDE, PPSD, the School Board, the City Council, and senior Administration leadership. That group is charged with developing the transition plan for the District, including plans for governance, operations, and specific roles for each of the entities to prepare for the District’s return. The City, PPSD, and RIDE also coordinate to discuss current events relating to education and management of PPSD, intergovernmental affairs, data and evaluation at the District, ongoing City-PPSD partnerships on facilities, programming and partnerships, early education, and summer learning.

The return of PPSD to local management will require clear protocols to transfer operational services that have been divided between RIDE and PPSD back to the City of Providence. This report is the foundation for this next phase of work in which the City, RIDE, and PPSD outline systems, structures, roles, and responsibilities for each entity for the return of the District to local management. This planning will proceed in accordance with RIDE Commissioner Infante-Green’s February 2025 letter on the return of PPSD to local control. When the District returns to local management, RIDE will continue in its role as a regulatory agency supporting local education agencies (LEAs) like PPSD and will provide resources to support the District in continuing implementation of the Turnaround Action Plan.

FUNDING, FINANCES, AND CITY OF PROVIDENCE BUDGET SUPPORT

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Fund PPSD consistent with the 2024 settlement agreement with RIDE.
- Begin conversations on funding priorities with PPSD’s Finance Department.
- Explore opportunities for private funding to support educational opportunities at PPSD, including after-school and summer programming.
- Advocate, in collaboration with PPSD and the School Board, for state legislation that will allow the City of Providence to fully fund obligations to the schools without cutting critical services to families and businesses.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Ensure continued adequate funding for the District consistent with state law, including through 2030 consistent with state law, and advocate for local resources to meet the District’s needs.
- Develop a timeline for PPSD budget development so that the PPSD budget is integrated with the development and submission of the Mayor’s budget to the City Council.
- Collaborate with PPSD leadership on continued support and professional development for school-based leaders to build upon ongoing efforts for school-based budgeting at the District.
- Develop systems for transparent budget reporting for the Mayor, the School Board, and the public.
- Establish regular communications between City Finance and PPSD Finance teams to collaborate regarding budget and finance best practices.
- Invite PPSD’s grants management staff to collaborate with the City’s grants coordination team to collaborate on grant proposals.

FUNDING, FINANCES, AND CITY OF PROVIDENCE BUDGET SUPPORT

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- PPSD needed more education funding from the State of Rhode Island. The state only started providing designated funding for multilingual learners in the 2017 fiscal year—the historic level of funding support for multilingual learners at PPSD from the State was inadequate.
- Stakeholders were concerned about the City’s willingness to commit to fully funding PPSD at the level required by state law.
- There should be adequate and equitable funding for PPSD during the academic year. Funding for after-school and summer programming should be a secondary priority to adequately funding PPSD during the school year.
- PPSD should seek and leverage private funding to achieve its educational goals. Business leaders were ready to help PPSD, but did not know how to help—there were concerns that their investments would not have an impact or would be band-aids for a broken system.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- Staff members from the Mayor’s Office reported that they are engaged in strategic planning to anticipate and respond to the financial impacts of declining student enrollment in PPSD.
- The implementation of school-based budgeting helped better understand resources at the school level. School leaders shared they received support from the District to align their budgets with schools’ academic focus and programming.
- PPSD’s budget should be better communicated with educators. Educators were concerned about PPSD’s use of funds for external consultants with declining student enrollment within the District, the dispute with the City of Providence over funding owed to PPSD under the Crowley Act, and the culmination of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding.



FUNDING, FINANCES, AND CITY OF PROVIDENCE BUDGET SUPPORT

CITY OF PROVIDENCE BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The City of Providence develops an annual budget for each fiscal year which starts in July and ends in June of the following year. To start the budget development process, City departments submit a budget proposal in February that the Finance Department reviews by line item before the full budget is prepared and proposed by the Mayor to the City Council in April each year. Taxes and state aid are the largest sources of revenue, totaling almost 85 percent of the City's revenue. The City's greatest expenditures are for employee salaries and benefits and when combined with contractual obligations, represents \$161 million each year in fixed costs that do not change year over year. About 23 percent of the fiscal year budget is appropriated to the District. The City of Providence's current fiscal year budget is around \$600 million, with \$146.5 million allocated to PPSD in fiscal year 2025.

PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

According to Rhode Island state statute §16-7-20.4, the State provides extra support for school districts in distressed communities like Providence. The State of Rhode Island provides most of the funding for PPSD through state education aid in the Governor's annual budget. The General Assembly reviews the Governor's budget and state aid for education may increase from the time the state budget is first proposed in January to when the final budget is passed in June.

The City is obligated to maintain its annual funding effort, called maintenance of effort (MOE), or a certain level of funding for the District irrespective of whether PPSD is under State intervention. The City appropriated \$146.5 million to PPSD in the most recent budget year. This is consistent with national trends where most funding for local school district comes from federal, county, and state funds.

Funding for PPSD Remains Priority for City of Providence

The City remains committed to honoring the court settlement with RIDE related to PPSD annual funding, including the fiscal year 2027 commitment to increase local contribution to PPSD by the same percentage as the total increase of state aid. The City will work closely with the District to understand priority budget needs and fund the District, and will ensure continued adequate funding for the District, including through 2030, consistent with state law, and advocate for local resources to meet PPSD's needs.

The City of Providence believes that delivering high-quality public education at PPSD and reliable City services such as recreation opportunities, summer employment experiences, and maintaining thriving greenspaces and parks complement each other and allows Providence to be a city that best serves and meets the needs of all of its residents. This important work starts at the school level with creating a collaborative culture where educators are regarded as professional partners alongside principals and other school-based leaders. Please see the section on Supporting Talent for more information on the City's plans to support this work by empowering both our educators and school-based leaders.

PPSD Budget Development Timeline and School-Based Budgeting

When PPSD returns to local management, the timeline for budget development will start and end earlier, with the budget finalized by February each year. The District will present their budget to the School Board for approval in January and the District will submit their final budget to the Mayor in February similarly to other City departments. The City will establish a functioning and collaborative relationship with PPSD with open communication on funding priorities between both entities. PPSD has implemented school-based budgeting since the State intervention began. This approach has allowed for staffing and other needs to be aligned with programming and student learning needs at each school. To support implementation of school-based budgeting, administrators at each school should have a better

FUNDING, FINANCES, AND CITY OF PROVIDENCE BUDGET SUPPORT

understanding of how funds at their school are allocated and spent. The City will work with PPSD to ensure that all school-based leaders, including both principals and assistant principals, have the skills and expertise to understand their school's budget and to identify funding priorities that align with and are responsive to the needs of their student body. When the District returns to local management, all school-based leaders will have access to school-based budgeting platforms. For school-based leaders who are newer to their role, the City will support Professional Learning Communities where administrators may share resources on school-based budgeting and also partner with the District to continue to develop and share resources on the various sources of education funding and how they may be spent.

The Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) was developed by the State of Rhode Island and implemented in fiscal year 2010 to allow school districts to track and compare their financial information with other municipalities. UCOA standardizes the account codes for different expenditure categories to enable comparisons on expenditure between districts. This categorization method aims to increase transparency, uniformity, accountability, and comparability of financial information for all schools and districts across Rhode Island. This allows districts to link specific investments in education to student outcomes, allowing them to identify which funding best supports progress in schools. Despite its goal to simplify and standardize District financial data, many school districts have expressed how UCOA funding remains confusing. Initially, there were too many codes and Rhode Island lacked a statewide standard protocol for applying codes. RIDE is working to simplify these guides to help users understand and analyze UCOA data. As we plan for the return of PPSD to local management, in partnership with RIDE and PPSD, the City will revise existing account classifications based on updated budget trends and best practices in education. We will ensure that these revisions comply with current UCOA guidelines outlined by the state.

Seeking More Funding for PPSD

In addition to adequately funding PPSD during the academic year, the City remains committed to offering our youth continued education, recreation, enrichment, and workforce development opportunities both after-school and in the summer months. The 2019 Johns Hopkins Review highlighted how business leaders and both private and philanthropic funders would like to invest in PPSD and help Providence achieve its educational vision and goals for students. Building out a robust extended learning program could be an excellent venue for private philanthropy to support PPSD's work toward the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan.

The City is committed to exploring private funding opportunities to complement federal, state, and City investments in education and especially priorities relating to after-school and summer programming. The City will pursue these funding opportunities in line with the City's and PPSD's values and identified priorities for education and youth development. The City presently has a grants manager who identifies competitive funding opportunities from the federal and state governments and both private and philanthropic funders. Identifying these funds to further the City and District's educational goals will be a priority. When PPSD returns to local management, PPSD's grants staff will collaborate with the City's grants coordination team. This multi-departmental team supports staff collaboration for more impactful grant proposals and grant management. PPSD participated in similar collaborations before the State intervention and their participation in this team will help both the City and District align their funding priorities to achieve our shared educational goals.



SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Support legislation that implements components of shared accountability at PPSD, including to address matters such as retention, seniority, due process for educators, and introducing a Providence-specific career ladder.
- Develop capacity and protocols to support PPSD on matters relating to human resources and personnel management.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Review management of all benefits, including the prior hybrid management of self-insured benefits to assess the most successful future state.
- Partner with PPSD to conduct a collaborative assessment of the District's human resources structure and services model to foster a coordinated City support system through the City's Department of People and Culture or human resources department.
- Participate in the negotiation of the collective bargaining agreement with the Providence Teachers Union (PTU).

SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- Educators lacked agency and input into decisions in their classroom and at their school. Educators were unable to improve their teaching due to limited opportunities for professional development—only one professional development day was included in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA).
- The CBA limited staffing at schools. Administrators and teachers shared that it was impossible to remove underperforming teachers from schools. Additionally, the CBA constrained hiring and firing processes at schools.
- There was a high incidence of teacher absenteeism, with some teachers chronically absent. Many classes were staffed by substitutes, aides, or other teachers in the department—some classes were disbanded for the day due to the lack of teachers, with students sent to other classrooms for the class period.
- The role of Teacher Assistants (TAs) in classrooms remained unclear. There were inconsistencies in how TAs supported classrooms—some TAs actively engaged in delivering instruction, while others provided one-on-one assistance to students or engaged in busywork like checking the completeness of an assignment on their computer.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- PPSD has improved district-wide performance in filling hard-to-fill educator positions. A review of the teacher evaluation process for educators indicates that it aligns with the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards.
- Changes beginning with the 2020 CBA and continuing with the 2023 CBA have empowered school leaders with increased decision-making authority as the hiring manager for their schools. These process improvements have allowed school leaders to staff teaching positions at their schools with qualified teachers.
- Teachers reported that turnover in District leadership, especially in the Teaching and Learning department, has led to inconsistent system building. Teachers, parents, and community members reported that teacher turnover has been due to a lack of trust in the District and the turnaround process.
- PPSD has increased access to job-embedded professional development for teachers. New teachers have five days of District-led professional learning before the start of the school year and teachers have 90 minutes of professional learning every other week at school. However, this professional learning and coaching support from the District, as well as the new teacher mentoring program, have not been consistent, targeted, or appropriately differentiated.

SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

Educators and school-based leaders are the heart of PPSD—they are not only instructors and administrators, but also coaches, club leaders, academic advisors, and mentors for our students. These educators and school-based administrators have chosen PPSD and our students—they choose to work in our vibrant urban public school district and strive daily to meet both the academic and social-emotional needs of each student in their classroom and at their school while delivering excellent, high-quality instruction. Many PPSD educators and administrators have served in the District for decades, oftentimes teaching multiple generations within each family, and have remained with the District during the State intervention.

During the State intervention, educators continue to demonstrate their deep commitment to PPSD students and families and caregivers, as well as their fellow educators, even when they have been asked to do and give more of themselves as instructors with less support and leadership from both the District and RIDE. They continue to advocate for more school- and educator-based decision making on curricula in order to develop lessons that will both advance student learning and be meaningful to students. Educators also seek continued professional development to become better instructors so they may best serve PPSD's diverse student body, including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services. Along with offering our students a world-class education, supporting our educators and school-based leaders remains the highest priority for the City as we plan for the return of PPSD to local management.

Findings from the City's community engagement report highlight strong interest from community members for more school-level decision making when the District returns to local control. Both students and educators desire dynamic curricula that include topics that are most valuable for students to learn. Youth made it clear that educator and curricular diversity should be priorities in the City's planning—this includes hiring and retaining more educators whose racial/ethnic backgrounds and lived experiences mirror their own. Educators seek more organizational support, as well as better benefits and appropriate access to resources and training to strengthen their instruction in order to feel empowered in their current roles as instructors and mentors.

SUPPORTING SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERSHIP AT PPSD

When the District returns to local management, the City will support the Superintendent and PPSD's leadership team in increasing both educator recruitment and retention as needed, in order to continue to build a team of the best educators who are committed to teaching in a vibrant, urban school district. We will support a culture that demonstrates both the City and District's trust in our educators and school-based leaders. When PPSD returns to the local control, the Superintendent and District leadership team will continue implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and offer continuous professional development so that educators may become experts on this curriculum, while also respecting the educator experience. The City will also support School Board and District leadership in assessing the need for additional coaches and intervention staff at each school in the District to build a team of staff whose roles directly and positively impact student outcomes and achievement.

To support educators and school-based leaders at PPSD, the City would like to explore introducing shared accountability to both create a fulfilling professional experience for educators and to deliver an education program that provides quality public education meeting the needs of all children and youth in Providence. In shared accountability, school-based staff, including educators, school-based leaders, and support and administrative staff, collectively work towards improving student learning and outcomes and increasing student achievement at their school. This collaborative approach could ensure that PPSD will attract and retain high quality educational professionals with a shared commitment to provide all children with a world-class public education. PPSD educators will have a meaningful voice and an integral role in fulfilling their shared commitment to our children and youth. Implementing

SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

collaborative decision making at the District could include a combination of both technical and adaptive changes, with engagement and involvement by both educators and PPSD central office administrators.

In collaborative decision making, individual schools serve as the unit of change, and when the District returns to local management, the City will support a model of collaborative decision making at PPSD. The following recommendations on shared accountability stem from the May 2024 Rhode Island State Senate Special Legislative Commission Report on labor-management standards at PPSD:

- **Collaborative Decision-Making Structures:** This includes school-based decision making led by a Teacher Leadership Team that implements a continuous improvement plan. The continuous improvement plan will include the development and approval of working conditions, defining priorities and goals, and setting strategic actions. School-based leaders will build the Teacher Leadership Team at their school, inviting members so that all grades, departments, and specialty areas are represented and identifying members with a commitment to and vision for school-wide change and who are respected by their colleagues. A school-based management model should empower school-based leaders with authority over staffing, budgets, implementation of the District's high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) at their school, and partnerships, while providing performance-based incentives and professional growth opportunities to retain and elevate the most effective school leaders.
- **Accountability for Administrators:** Like educators, school administrators should also be evaluated on their partnership and collaboration with educators and other school-based staff. PPSD central office administrators should similarly be evaluated on their collaboration with Teacher Leadership Teams and school-based leadership. Faculty surveys on school culture and climate may also provide helpful data on partnership and collaboration between educators, school-based leaders, and PPSD central office administrators.
- **School-Based Management:** PPSD should ensure that educators at each school have the flexibility to adapt their programs to the needs of their student population. Through collaborative leadership, each school may best adapt its program to students' needs through budget, personnel, and professional development. Collaborative leadership and decision making include school budget and staffing, implementation of the District's HQIM at their school, school calendar, class coverage and substitutes, and scheduling of parent-teacher meetings.
- **Removing Seniority-Only Mandates:** Rhode Island is one of only a few states that still maintains seniority-only mandates for educators. Years of teaching experience is a valuable foundation for skill and effectiveness but is not the only determinant of effective teaching. Removing seniority-only mandates will help advance faculty diversity. PPSD's efforts to recruit and retain teachers whose backgrounds and cultures match that of students are compromised by seniority-based mandates for classroom assignments and layoffs. These gains in diversity may be eliminated through layoffs based exclusively on seniority. The City will support educator improvement plans, with specific and timed goals for educators who have received low performance evaluation scores.
- **Career Ladder:** A career ladder specific to PPSD will provide our current educators, as well as educators interested in positions within the District, with a clear pathway for professional growth and advancement within the profession. Professional educators deserve a career ladder in which additional responsibilities and educational attainment are reflected in their position and compensation. This career ladder may consider service as a peer mentor to other educators, as well as service on Teacher Leadership Teams in both compensation and career advancement.

SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

Implementing these components of collaborative decision making at PPSD will require supporting these legislative amendments through Rhode Island General Law and continuing progress on negotiations on the collective bargaining agreement with the Providence Teachers Union.

Implementing a Model of Collaborative Decision Making

In the 2025 General Assembly session, legislative leaders will introduce bills to promote the following recommendations from the 2024 Rhode Island State Senate Special Legislative Commission Report to implement shared accountability through RI General Law:

- Consider seniority as a tiebreaker in personnel decisions at PPSD.
- Streamline due process for educators by including a timeline for a final decision on a dismissal decision, such as Massachusetts' requirement that this decision must be issued within 30 days of the end of the hearing.
- Add a Providence-specific career ladder that considers teaching effectiveness and additional responsibilities, such as serving as a teacher mentor or on a school leadership team.

When PPSD returns to local management, the Administration and School Board will negotiate and approve the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the Providence Teachers Union. The City believes that implementing a model of collaborative decision making will empower educators and school-based leaders, as well as students at PPSD. This school-level decision making will in turn improve student outcomes and also create a supportive and fulfilling professional experience for educators. The key components of this model must be negotiated and integrated into the CBA with the Providence Teachers Union. To prepare for these negotiations, the City is committed to developing a model of teacher leadership at PPSD in partnership with educators and leadership at the District and RIDE, ideally as part of the final transition plan to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education for review and approval in June 2025.

SUPPORTING EDUCATOR RETENTION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The City is committed to learning and professional growth for our educators, both to increase retention and to create a rewarding professional experience so that educators are excited to become career educators within the District.

When the District returns to local management, the City will partner with the Superintendent to work towards implementing strategies for educator retention at PPSD, such as:

- **Introduce a pay scale that allows for career-level pay sooner and additional compensation for educators with dual certifications:** Educators must oftentimes work at the District for many years to reach career-level pay. When PPSD returns to local management, the City would like to work with the Providence Teachers Union and the Superintendent to revise the educators' pay scale to reduce the time for educators to reach career-level pay. Additionally, the City hopes to offer more competitive wages for educators starting at the District, as well as for mid- and career-level educators. Additionally, the City will explore providing a higher stipend for educators with dual certification, including educators with certification in special education and multilingual learners—and ensure that these stipends account for inflation and cost-of-living.

SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

- **Include mental health coverage in educators' health plan:** The City will support a multi-pronged approach to support educators' mental health. This includes mentoring and coaching, as well as affinity groups. We will work with the Providence Teachers and 1033 Unions, as well as the District's health insurance provider, to include affordable deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments for mental health care.
- **Provide resources for teaching and learning:** Educators oftentimes spend their own money to purchase supplies like notebooks and pens and pencils for their classrooms. School-based budgeting will allow educators to be able to request and receive the supplies needed for their classroom in a timely manner—so educators do not have to spend their own money to acquire these supplies. Additionally, the City will work with District leadership to ensure textbooks and technology are up to date to facilitate 21st century learning, including visual supports and physical manipulatives to support learning for multilingual learners and students receiving special education services.
- **Mentoring:** The District will have a comprehensive mentoring program to support all educators and new educators, in particular. This includes partnerships with local experts in mentoring to support educators in their first two years and an ongoing mentoring program that pairs new educators with mid- and career-level educators. School-based leaders will also receive training on how to best support and mentor newer educators.

Professional development is a key component of educator retention—and also has a direct impact on student learning and achievement. During the transition, the City will partner with PPSD leadership to understand professional development within the Providence Teachers Union and 1033 contracts and the topics that have been covered on professional development days in recent years. When the District returns to local management, the City will prioritize professional development that is relevant and supports teaching and learning and is responsive to educators' experience level.

When the District returns to local management, the City will implement strategies for educator professional development, such as:

- **Focus on instructional practice and concrete materials:** This approach emphasizes professional development and learning relating to instruction, rather than relating to content or subject matter. This may include introducing new approaches to and models for instruction and providing educators time to plan how they may incorporate these models into their existing curricula and lesson plans during workshops. Educators will have products, whether refined assessments or revamped curricula, that they may directly apply to their classroom following professional development days.
- **Follow-up on professional development:** Current approaches to educator professional development rarely include opportunities for follow-up. When the District returns to local control, the City would like to partner with PPSD leadership to introduce follow-up sessions where educators may meet and collaborate with each other to discuss implementation of materials they created during professional development. This will also help with accountability and ensure that learning is ongoing, built as a cycle, rather than limited to specific professional development days. When the District returns to local control, professional development will follow a model where educators learn a new skill or strategy, implement the skill or strategy in the classroom, and then reflect and share their experience and consider other ways to implement their learning in their classroom.

SUPPORTING TALENT AT PPSD

SUPPORTING A COORDINATED APPROACH TO HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

To prepare to support PPSD when it returns to local management, the City restructured the former Department of Human Resources as the Department of People and Culture (DPC). DPC was redesigned as a center of excellence to support current City employees and to prepare to support PPSD upon the District's return to local control. DPC presently has teams for employee experience, talent, equity, inclusion, and belonging; occupational safety and health administration (OSHA), and benefits.

Before the State intervention, the City's Department of Human Resources was engaged in negotiations for the CBA with Providence Teachers Union and also managed benefits for the District.

When PPSD returns to local control, DPC will conduct a collaborative assessment of the human resources structure and services model at both the District and the City to identify redundancies between departments and areas for improvement in order to transition to a coordinated City support system through DPC.

PROCUREMENT

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Evaluate ways to accelerate the Board of Contract Supply timeline, including by adding additional BOCS meetings, to ensure that purchasing practices are efficient and transparent once the District is returned to local control.
- Communicate with District leadership about how the rules guiding procurement will differ when PPSD returns to local management.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Leverage the School Board's seat on the Board of Contract and Supply for School Board review of PPSD procurement contracts and to engage the City Council in the review of PPSD contracts according to the Providence Municipal Code.
- Assess the impact of and consider amendments to the 2022 City Charter revisions that increased the procurement threshold to \$10,000 for general supplies and \$20,000 for construction to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability.
- Designate an additional staff member within the City's Purchasing Department to specifically manage purchasing and contracting for the District.
- Offer technical support when PPSD's Purchasing Department prepares award letters to be submitted to the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply.
- Explore existing State of Rhode Island Master Price Agreements (MPAs) to determine if there are collective purchasing agreements that can be applied to better serve schools and students.
- Work with District procurement staff to establish a clear process map for purchasing that eliminates additional or redundant approvals to decrease the process time while maintaining transparency and accountability.

PROCUREMENT

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- Before the State intervention, the procurement process was a key deterrent to PPSD’s success—and especially to learning at the District. Any request more than \$5,000 had to be voted upon by the City Council and the School Board. Small vendors did not have the staff to attend multiple committee and full board meetings. Relatedly, schools requested to have more autonomy in purchasing and procurement.
- Given the extensive process, the July School Board and December and August City Council recesses delayed procurement for PPSD—and were inconvenient for the new school year commencing in early September.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- PPSD has streamlined the process of working with contractors.



PROCUREMENT

PROVIDENCE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Procurement is the process by which schools ask for and obtain the supplies and services they need. At the City of Providence, as well as within PPSD, school supplies from paper and pencils to curriculum and consultant services must be procured. An efficient procurement process will allow schools to purchase supplies and services, from notebooks and software to collect data on attendance and student outcomes to meals and transportation to and from school, in a timely manner and will reduce the administrative burden placed on educators and school-level administrators.

Actors involved in procurement for PPSD include the District, the City Board of Contract and Supply, School Board, City Council, and the Administration according to the type and cost of the item that is being procured. The 2019 Johns Hopkins Review discussed how the number of onerous steps to obtain basic school supplies like pencils and paper was a burden for school administrators and delayed learning at PPSD.

To make procurement more efficient, the City of Providence mapped PPSD's procurement processes before the 2019 State intervention and current processes for procurement under State intervention. This process mapping helped identify values for procurement when PPSD returns to local control. This mapping was paired with an analysis of the City of Providence Home Rule Charter, municipal code, and other policies to identify which procurement steps are required by law.

Procurement Before the State Intervention

Before the State intervention in PPSD in 2019, there were two main categories for procurement: purchases between \$500 and \$5,000 and purchases over \$5,000:

- **For purchases between \$500 and \$5,000:** Much of this procurement process took place within schools. When school staff wanted to purchase an item, they were required to obtain quotes from three vendors and submit a requisition form to the school principal. School principals then approved the requisition before sending to PPSD's Purchasing Department and Budget Office for final approval.
- **For purchases over \$5,000, either an RFP or Piggyback:** School leaders developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) or scope of work if the school plans to send the request to vendors within the Master Purchasing Agreement (MPA). Once vendors responded, the school selected the best bid and prepared an award letter. In piggybacking, PPSD uses an existing contract to purchase the same goods and services—for example, PPSD could piggyback existing contracts for transportation or food services. Schools passed the award letter for an RFP or piggyback to PPSD's Purchasing Department for approval and PPSD's Finance Department for review. Subsequently, the City Purchasing Department approved the bid for review by the Board of Contract and Supply and the School Board. Finally, the City Council approved the RFP or piggyback—first through the Council Finance Committee and then through full Council approval. The final step was the Mayor's signature approving the purchase.
- **For purchases over \$5,000, Sole Source:** Similarly to the RFP/piggyback process, schools determined their need but selected a single vendor before preparing an award letter. The rest of the process remained identical, including sending the award letter for review by PPSD Purchasing, PPSD Finance, City Purchasing, City Board of Contract and Supply, and City Council approval.

PROCUREMENT

Procurement During the State Intervention

During the State intervention in PPSD, procurement has been simplified but lacks public transparency and accountability when compared to the pre-2019 system. Just four entities between PPSD and RIDE approve all purchasing under \$200,000: School requests must be approved by RIDE’s Director of Purchasing and RIDE’s Director of Finance. Next, requests must be approved by PPSD’s Superintendent, followed by final confirmation by RIDE’s Commissioner.

Table 1 below presents a summary of each entity’s involvement and role in procurement for PPSD and demonstrates how several entities have legal responsibilities related to oversight of procurement.

Table 1: Outline of Entities and Associated Goals for PPSD Procurement

Entity	Goal of Involvement in Procurement	Reason for Step
PPSD School-Based Leadership (including principal) or Central Office staff	Identify items that must be procured.	School leadership must identify the supplies, service, and technology needed.
PPSD Purchasing Department	To provide transparency to the public, develop request for proposals to acquire desired item(s) and identify final vendor; prepare letter for City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply.	This step allows PPSD to submit an open request for proposals and any entity meeting the guidelines may submit a proposal.
City of Providence Purchasing Department	To provide transparency to the public, submit letter from PPSD Purchasing Department to the Board of Contract and Supply.	This step allows PPSD to communicate to the City of Providence the vendor they have selected to procure their items.
Board of Contract and Supply	To maintain accountability to budget management, approve selection of vendor.	Approval of PPSD purchases over \$10,000 is required by City of Providence Charter and an Ordinance amending the Charter in 2022.
City Council	To maintain accountability to budget management, approve selection of vendor.	Approval of PPSD purchases over \$10,000 is required by City of Providence Charter and an Ordinance amending the Charter in 2022.
School Board	To maintain accountability to budget management, approve selection of vendor.	Approval of PPSD purchases over \$10,000 is required by City of Providence Charter and an Ordinance amending the Charter in 2022.
Mayor	To maintain accountability to budget management, the Mayor or their designee to the Board of Contract and Supply will provide the final signature approving purchases greater than \$10,000.	Approval of PPSD purchases over \$10,000 is required by City of Providence Charter and an Ordinance amending the Charter in 2022.

PROCUREMENT

DESIGNING PROCUREMENT FOR TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND EFFICIENCY

Procurement for PPSD before the State intervention was identified as transparent but cumbersome. Procurement for PPSD under the State intervention is efficient, but lacks transparency and public accountability. When PPSD returns to local management, the City of Providence will prioritize system improvements to ensure procurement will be transparent, accountable, and efficient.

City of Providence Charter Changes to Facilitate Procurement for PPSD

In the 2022 revisions to the City of Providence Charter, the City of Providence increased the threshold requiring Board of Contract and Supply approval from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for regular purchasing and to \$20,000 for construction. This means that when PPSD returns to the local management, procurement less than \$10,000 for general supplies and \$20,000 for construction will not require approval by the Board of Contract and Supply, addressing a key concern raised about procurement in the 2019 Johns Hopkins Review.

Analysis of Procurement in City of Providence Home Rule Charter and Ordinance

The following sections synthesize procurement in the City of Providence Home Rule Charter, in the City's municipal code, and in other City policies. The analysis presents a synthesis of how these laws describe each entity's role in procurement for PPSD.

Administration: The City Charter states that all purchases for Providence Public Schools (PPSD) must be made through the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply or the City's Purchasing Department. The Board of Contract and Supply presides over all purchasing and procurement over \$20,000 (for construction projects) and over \$10,000 (for all other purchases of materials, supplies, services, equipment, and all other necessary categories of procurement for the City). The Mayor of Providence or their designee sits on the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply.

Providence Public School Department (PPSD): The City Charter's description of PPSD's role in procurement for the District matches procurement processes for different types, as well as amounts of purchases.

School Board: When the District is under local control, the City Charter gives the School Board authority over funds appropriated to PPSD and the power to spend these funds as they see best for students. However, this excludes salaries for teachers and other union employees, which are negotiated in the collective bargaining agreement. The School Board must identify an individual to make purchases for PPSD and all purchases must be made by this individual; this individual will maintain records of these purchases. Additionally, the School Board secretary must maintain records of all supplies purchased for PPSD and certify these expenses against bills to the City controller. School Board bylaws state that individual members' duties include appraisal of PPSD operations and collaboration with the Superintendent and the City's Finance Department. However, these bylaws do not explicitly state how the School Board should be involved in PPSD's finances (such as their involvement in procurement for PPSD).

The City Charter states that the President of the School Board or their designee sits on the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply.

City Council: The President of the City Council or their designee sits on the City of Providence Board of Contract and Supply. The City of Providence Municipal Code states that City Council approval for contracts is only required when contract amounts are more than \$500,000, are multi-year contracts, sole source vendor awards, leases with the City of Providence greater than \$200,000, and any contract

PROCUREMENT

extension longer than one year or more than \$100,000. As such, City Council approval is not required for PPSD procurement and contracts that do not meet these criteria—this may help eliminate one step from the process to approve purchases for the District.

The Board of Contract and Supply’s review of proposals ensures there is accountability and leveraging the expertise of the School Board’s seat will ensure that contracts are aligned with priorities for PPSD. Public availability for Board of Contract and Supply notes allow for transparency and accountability.

Increasing Frequency of Board of Contract and Supply and School Board Finance Committee Meetings

When PPSD returns to local control, the addition of both school-based and District-wide contracts will significantly increase the volume of contracts that must be approved by the Board of Contract and Supply. To increase efficiency, Board of Contract and Supply meetings—which are currently held bi-weekly—will be more frequent. Similarly, the School Board Finance Committee, which must vote to approve contracts, will also meet more frequently.

Streamlining School Board Review through the Board of Contract and Supply

The School Board President or designee holds a seat on the City of Providence’s Board of Contract and Supply. This seat on the Board of Contract and Supply should be leveraged, especially once PPSD returns to local control, for School Board review and approval of purchases for the District. Board of Contract and Supply meeting agendas are published publicly the Friday before each Monday meeting, offering School Board members time to review materials for PPSD purchases and to share their feedback with the School Board President before the next Board of Contract and Supply meeting. Additionally, to offer School Board members more time to review contracts, the School Board President or designee will join Board of Contract and Supply preparatory meetings that are held the Thursday before a Monday Board of Contract and Supply meeting. This will provide School Board members additional time to review longer and larger contracts for PPSD.

However, larger multi-year, million-dollar-plus PPSD contracts should still be approved by the School Board Finance Committee before they are introduced to the Board of Contract and Supply for approval. To support review of these contracts, a small team consisting of Mayor’s Office and City Council staff may collectively review contracts and then present a summary of their analysis to the School Board Finance Committee to ensure that the scope of work meets the needs of PPSD students and also aligns with values for the City and District.

Supporting PPSD’s Purchasing Office

The City of Providence’s Purchasing Department will work more collaboratively and proactively with PPSD’s Purchasing Department when the District returns to local management. The submission of award letters and other communications related to procurement from PPSD’s Purchasing Department to the City’s Purchasing Department was identified as a point of delay because each entity has different templates for these communication materials. To address this concern, the City of Providence will offer ongoing and regular technical support to PPSD’s Purchasing Department and integrate PPSD into weekly office hours and online resources that are regularly updated with new processes. Purchasing office hours are presently available to and utilized by City staff and have ensured that materials, from requests for proposals to award letters, are submitted by the deadline for Board of Contract and Supply meetings. City collaboration with PPSD’s Purchasing Department will ensure that letters submitted to the Board of Contract and Supply by PPSD’s Purchasing Department are complete and may be introduced at the desired Board meeting date.

Increasing Procurement Threshold through Amendment to City of Providence Charter

The 2022 revisions to the City of Providence Charter increased the threshold for Board of Contract and Supply approval to \$10,000 for procurement for general supplies and to \$20,000 for procurement for construction. These revisions will also apply to procurement for PPSD when the District returns to

PROCUREMENT

local control. There is an opportunity to increase the procurement threshold once again to better serve PPSD at the next set of revisions to the City Charter—most likely in 2027. Before the next Charter revisions, the City will assess the impact of the 2022 revisions to the procurement threshold and whether school-based leaders feel that it is easier to purchase supplies when compared to their experiences before 2019, as well as during the State intervention. Additionally, the City will assess the average cost for PPSD contracts when the District returns to local management. This will identify features of contracts that should undergo a more detailed review and contracts that may be approved with less stringent review. This analysis will determine whether the City should increase the procurement threshold once again during the next Charter revision.



DATA SHARING AND DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Identify roles and functions that may be duplicative between the City of Providence and PPSD's information technology (IT) departments and allocate resources to priority needs for the District.
- Identify data available within the City of Providence and how entities and individuals outside of City government may access this data.
- Draft new data sharing agreements (DSAs) and update existing DSAs between the City of Providence and PPSD to share key student performance data, particularly student specific data related to attendance, to inform City investments for out-of-school learning time to improve student outcomes.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Create collaborative data and information systems that are also secure and protect student and family and caregiver data, to keep Providence students safe.
- Align Providence and PPSD information systems tracking student attendance to ensure consistent data collection and reporting at both schools and Recreation Centers and so both the City and District may analyze this data to improve programming for youth.
- Continue to strengthen PPSD's internal information technology capacity and security, to increase the District's technical expertise, streamline operations, and reduce redundancies so both the City and District follow the same protocols and abide by the same standards for data security.
- Establish regular opportunities for collaboration and best practice sharing between City IT and PPSD IT teams to share expertise in topics like cybersecurity across both entities.

DATA SHARING AND DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- There were several identified areas where PPSD, RIDE, and the City inadequately shared data with each other. Establishing data sharing agreements with PPSD was cumbersome to design and implement, prohibiting coordination with other governing entities or community partners.
- RIDE shared little student data with PPSD, which made it difficult to automatically enroll students in programs like Food Stamps with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Long turnarounds on standardized test grading like the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) prevented teachers from sufficiently adjusting their lesson plans to meet shortcomings in student learning. RICAS is administered in the spring of each academic year and results are not available until the fall of the following academic year.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- School leaders say they regularly leverage data to make decisions. Sixty percent of school leaders reported that they review dashboard data or Skyward, a student information system. School leaders are using data to analyze student progress and to inform interventions related to academic and non-academic supports (e.g. attendance).
- PPSD has implemented various data tracking and management systems since the State intervention began—many of these systems were built with an external partner. The District has also adopted Mastery Connect to collect assessment data including curriculum-based assessments and exit tickets.
- New data dashboards are in development, including Microsoft Power BI, which includes student assessments, attendance data, behavior referrals, counseling, communication with families, and career and technical education (CTE) information.

DATA SHARING AND DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Data and Information Systems collect and relay knowledge around how schools and students are performing, spanning topics from test scores to public safety. These systems rely on a variety of inputs to function well, including technical hardware and software, as well as staff reporting, collection, storage, and data sharing. To support student wellbeing, many entities gather data on Providence schools, including PPSD, RIDE, community partners, and various departments within the City of Providence.

These efforts to prioritize better coordination in the management of data and information systems will comply with relevant federal education data laws. This includes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which limits who may access student records, and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) that sets guidelines for administering student surveys that are funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) sets requirements for websites and online platforms that engage children who are under 13 years old, as well as on other websites that may collect data on users who are also under 13 years old.

The City of Providence will prioritize continued improvement on coordination and transparency in future management of data and information systems. The City and PPSD currently share little data with one another, leading to redundant systems that are less efficient and do not improve information security. Both entities are unaware of the data collected by the other party and are unable to share and exchange best practices on how to protect this data. When PPSD returns to local control, increased awareness of data collected by schools can help increase efficient decision making. Relatedly, RIDE, PPSD, and the City are not fully transparent about what data they have and how other entities may access it. To help improve student outcomes, the City will coordinate with PPSD to implement new and update existing data sharing agreements and better data storage and data labeling to decrease this opaqueness and improve information security and efficiency, especially as we prepare for the District’s return to local control.

CURRENT SYSTEMS

City of Providence

The City of Providence primarily uses four data and information systems platforms: Monday, Lawson, Asana, and Microsoft 365. PPSD also uses Lawson for employee purchasing, payroll, and retirement calculations. While the City has access to the Lawson data on District staff, the City may not access most other key data for school decision making—this includes access to student performance and District financial data. Access to student performance data through Data Sharing Agreements between the City and District will enable both the City and community partner organizations supporting student academics to better learn about youth academic performance and respond to their needs in a timely manner. District financial data, especially access to PPSD’s work order system to submit building facilities requests, would allow the City to better understand the District’s expenditures on maintenance issues.

PPSD

Like the City, PPSD presently uses multiple systems to track data, many of which overlap and are not used at full capacity. For example, the District uses a platform called Power BI to track metrics on attendance and testing, even though PPSD has access to other systems with similar functions that meet these needs. While multiple systems are necessary to collect and host student performance data, PPSD currently pays for more platforms than the District may need. The redundancy in these purchased systems likely stems from turnover as employees leave and enter the District. Current PPSD data systems managing security information (e.g. cameras and fire safety) are predominantly managed by the District’s security systems. PPSD’s Data and Assessment Department broadly manages student performance data, including attendance and test scores.

CASE STUDY



DATA SHARING AGREEMENT: PROVIDENCE AFTER SCHOOL ALLIANCE

The Data Sharing Agreement between PPSD and Providence After School Alliance (PASA) is one model of data sharing for student outcomes. PPSD and PASA have partnered to deliver high-quality out-of-school programs that provide targeted, student-specific and data-driven academic support through Governor Daniel J. McKee's Learn365RI initiative.

The Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year grant program is designed to improve student learning outcomes and increase three key metrics:

- Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) mathematics and English Language Arts scores.
- School attendance rates.
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates.

In 2024, RIDE awarded the City of Providence \$200,000 to partner with PASA to deliver high-quality out-of-school programs at two PPSD middle schools, Roger Williams and DeSesto Middle Schools. These middle schools were selected by PPSD to participate in this programming due to low achievement on the RICAS. PASA is collaborating with community partners, including Boys and Girls Club of Providence, to implement this programming in partnership with PPSD educators.

To support this program, both PASA and Boys and Girls Club of Providence will enter into data sharing agreements with PPSD, ensuring that out-of-school (OST) providers within these sites may request and have access the necessary data to seamlessly align the OST work with school-based needs. Leveraging the data from the agreement with PPSD, PASA may closely monitor and analyze student outcomes and disaggregate data by factors, including by multilingual learners, free and reduced lunch, and other metrics. PASA and the OST educators will also have the data necessary to adjust their instruction and support to students over the course of many weeks in response to participants' school day formative assessment results. This will allow both PASA and Boys and Girls Club of Providence to implement a targeted and responsive program that aligns with PPSD's district-wide priorities, as well as priorities for each of the respective middle schools. This data will also offer insight on the impact of OST programming on academic outcomes and will help inform future after-school programming that integrates both academic learning and enrichment.

DATA SHARING AND DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

COLLABORATIVE DATA SYSTEMS

During the City’s community engagement process, participants emphasized how improved digital infrastructure (such as more secure networks and more aligned learning platforms) should be a priority for the District. Creating collaborative data and information systems, with continued protection of student and family caregiver data in compliance with federal education data law, will help keep Providence students safe when PPSD returns to local management. Some data systems hosted by PPSD—especially around public safety—are not readily accessible by the City of Providence. The District does not immediately share or access information from safety cameras or fire alarms at school buildings and instead requires that the City requests permission to receive this data. After returning management of PPSD to local control, the City plans to designate staff to oversee all City cameras and other devices that collect information on public safety, regardless of whether those technologies are owned by school or municipal entities.

There is also opportunity for further alignment of existing City and District information systems. Recreation centers and schools serve the same youth and provide interconnected services, but they frequently use different data collection platforms to track student attendance. The City will explore where it may merge Recreation Department and PPSD platforms to reduce the number of duplicative systems and improve communication. Merging these platforms will increase the accessibility and usability of data collected by both schools and recreation centers to improve services and in turn, outcomes for Providence youth.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Continuing to strengthen PPSD’s information technology team with City support will enhance long-term sustainability and data security. PPSD’s IT department is currently understaffed—presently, no PPSD employee directly oversees the network, and the work has been outsourced to consultants. This reliance on external contractors presents risks, including reduced control over internal processes, potential delays in addressing technical issues, and a lack of institutional knowledge of IT systems within PPSD. When the District returns to local management, the City will partner with District leadership to identify roles and functions or contracts that may be duplicative between the City and PPSD’s information technology (IT) departments.



FACILITIES

PRIORITY ACTIONS BEFORE PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Continue implementation of PPSD’s capital plan that will invest more than \$1 billion in new and like-new school buildings across the District—this includes issuing requests for proposals for construction projects, evaluating proposals, and ongoing project management of these large-scale construction projects by the City’s Department of Public Property.
- Develop training and technical support materials to support PPSD staff in managing and integrating energy bills with the City’s existing energy management information system.
- Work collaboratively with PPSD and RIDE to ensure that construction projects are appropriately implemented, remain on track, and that challenges are mitigated.
- Assess opportunities to repurpose and develop school buildings that are no longer in use as the City continues to implement PPSD’s capital plan.

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHEN PPSD RETURNS TO LOCAL CONTROL

- Remain committed to performance-based contracting for facilities management for PPSD with a full scope of work with standards and guidance for ongoing facilities maintenance.
- Leverage funds in the City’s Revolving Fund to maintain the investments in school facilities through implementation of PPSD’s capital plan and prevent school facilities from falling into disrepair.
- Manage facilities repairs for school facilities through PPSD’s work order system.
- Align building management systems for all City-owned buildings, including school facilities, so that the City and its Department of Sustainability may access PPSD operational data to identify real-time cost saving strategies.
- Provide staff capacity to manage PPSD’s 44 school buildings and provide energy management services.
- Develop a uniform energy management plan that benefits the City, PPSD, and Providence taxpayers, including joint procurement efforts for energy supplies and services and renewable energy credits that benefit both parties.
- Continue to develop and maintain school yards, play areas, and outdoor classrooms to promote social, academic, and emotional learning by creating vibrant outdoor spaces that support hands-on education, foster social connections, and enhance students’ overall well-being. Currently, there is a lack of clarity around responsibility for these spaces and they are often not incorporated in routine maintenance plans. These spaces should be included in any RFP for maintenance moving forward.

FACILITIES

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2019 JOHNS HOPKINS REVIEW

- Poor building conditions disrupted learning. There were crumbling floors and lead paint falling from ceilings and the lighting in some classrooms was too dark. Tables in classrooms were chipped. The water at some schools was brown and stained the sinks. Some schools also had lead in their drinking water.
- There were significant health and safety concerns at PPSD buildings. There was also a lack of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). There were rodents inside schools, and students had sticky mouse traps stuck to their shoes. Some students, including older elementary school students, were allowed on floors with known lead contamination and other toxins.
- Safety and security at school buildings was a key concern for students, including in bathrooms. Students asked for locks on bathroom stalls.
- The time to fix facilities issues at school buildings was another concern. An order/request to fix a leaking raw sewer pipe in a classroom was not addressed until the educator posted about it on social media, when the problem was fixed within a couple days after posting it publicly. One principal reported that getting a broken window fixed took “from one day to a month.”
- There were concerns that investment only occurred in specific schools. Some PPSD schools had been invested in with air conditioning, computers, and books and others had not. PPSD students knew which schools have been invested in and which ones had not.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 2024 SCHOOLWORKS REPORT

- All PPSD students are on-track to be in new or like-new school buildings by 2030. This work stems from a revised capital building plan, a partnership between the City of Providence, PPSD, and RIDE.
- The City of Providence and PPSD have partnered on a new preventative maintenance plan to ensure that building quality is maintained.
- There are new data systems to track and analyze ongoing maintenance and facility challenges. PPSD has replaced the primary maintenance and custodial service vendor with a new, performance-based contract, to ensure that there is more clarity on cleanliness and maintenance, and a more responsive approach to the day-to-day needs of school staff, community partners, and students.

FACILITIES

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT STUDENT OUTCOMES

All students deserve to learn and play in spaces that are both safe and facilitate their continued learning and development. Throughout the City’s community engagement strategy, youth shared that they are distraught about the hazardous state of PPSD school buildings—this hampers their ability to learn, feel safe, and desire to attend school. Community members are eager for better facilities and infrastructure that supports the wellbeing of all who learn and work in Providence schools

Through the PPSD capital plan, the City is investing nearly \$1 billion to ensure that all PPSD students learn in school buildings that meet health and safety requirements and offer both physical spaces and technology that facilitate 21st century learning and meet our students’ needs. Phase I of the capital plan is complete and Phase II is ongoing. Phase I focused on elementary and high schools, with \$88.5 million invested in elementary schools and more than \$58 million invested in high schools. Phase II emphasizes middle schools and the District’s first Pre-K through 8 school buildings, with \$34.5 million for middle schools and \$111 million for Pre-K through 8 schools. Phase III similarly focuses on the Pre-K through 8 model, investing \$200 million in three new school buildings, and \$110 million for a new early career and college academy at Mount Pleasant High School. Phase IV will invest an additional \$300 million in PPSD schools across all divisions. Additionally, there are potential projects that will invest \$90M at PPSD schools in all three divisions. At the Mayor’s Community Conversations on Education, community members were excited by recent investments in school buildings and hope to see sustained infrastructure development in the years to come. Youth shared that better school buildings would increase their morale, comfort, and willingness to learn.

Ongoing maintenance through integrated facilities management and security systems for both the City and District will help sustain these capital investments in our school buildings, ensuring that decades of students continue to learn in spaces that make them feel valued and excited to learn. The City is also committed to ensuring that PPSD facilities meet the requirements of the City’s Carbon Neutral Ordinance and that the District leverages federal energy incentives to reduce costs for the school district. Ongoing maintenance of schoolyards and neighborhood parks will promote students’ health, well-being, and social-emotional development and allow for continued learning after-school and in the summer months.

The PPSD capital plan is a collaborative initiative by the City, RIDE, and PPSD to ensure that all students learn in a new or like-new space and spans schools in all divisions. The priorities of the PPSD capital plan include transformational projects that address systemic concerns at school facilities—building or renovating schools in neighborhoods where PPSD families live and bringing modern security and educational technology into public school buildings.

The capital plan prioritizes the Pre-K through eighth grade model so students may continue with the same learning community through elementary and middle school. All new school buildings and major building retrofits will comply with the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Neutral Schools initiative and the City of Providence’s ordinance ORD-2024-3 that all municipal buildings must be carbon-neutral by 2040, phasing fossil fuel use from all public buildings.

With the recent investments, three school buildings, William D’Abate and Frank Spaziano Elementary Schools and Narducci Learning Center now have fully modernized heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems for heating and cooling, two of which are 100% electric.



PPSD CAPITAL PLAN AS A SUCCESS STORY IN COLLABORATION

PPSD's capital plan is an example of the City and RIDE upholding the 2019 Collaborative Agreement established at the start of the State intervention. The capital plan addresses many of the health and safety concerns raised in the 2019 Johns Hopkins Review of the District and equitably invests in schools across all Providence neighborhoods and more importantly, in school buildings in neighborhoods where students live. The capital plan prioritizes transformational school-wide projects that implement the Pre-K through eighth grade model for most schools, with additional and purposeful Pre-K classrooms. The City is committed to implementing the full capital plan and ensuring that all PPSD students are in new or like-new buildings.

As the capital plan continues to be implemented during the State intervention, funds to support these large-scale investments in our public schools come from the Revolving Fund. The Revolving Fund is a partnership between the City and PPSD to address basic facilities needs across the District, including boilers, gym floors, and building improvements. Currently, the City issues a request for proposals for school construction projects and evaluates bids before identifying a vendor for each project. City of Providence Public Property staff also serve as project managers for each school construction project. As the District returns to local management, the City will need to ensure proper maintenance, upkeep of these facilities, and implementation of ongoing opportunities for energy efficiency measures to maximize energy cost savings and improve indoor and outdoor air quality in school buildings.



FACILITIES

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT OF PPSD

The City of Providence currently manages 58 City-owned buildings—and will be charged with maintaining 44 additional City-owned buildings when PPSD returns to local control. While PPSD facilities are owned by the City, RIDE and PPSD have continued the pre-intervention approach of contracting with a third-party for ongoing facilities management during the State intervention. However, in addition to these large-scale investments through PPSD’s capital plan, the City continues to participate in ongoing project management at PPSD facilities. Ongoing projects at PPSD facilities include roof repair, boiler replacements, parking lot repair and replacement, and playground and sidewalk repairs and replacements through the Revolving Fund.

When PPSD returns to local management, the District’s facilities manager will be in regular communication with leadership at the City’s Department of Public Property—much like before the State intervention. Since the City of Providence will need to manage the school buildings when PPSD returns to local control, the Department of Public Property will need to build additional staff capacity.

Third-Party Facilities Management Contract for PPSD

Prior to the State intervention and currently, PPSD facilities are managed through a performance-based third-party contractor and this approach should continue when the District returns to local control. The return to municipal management will present an opportunity for the City to issue a new request for proposals (RFP) and ensure that the new contract meets all needs for facilities management at PPSD, as well as the City’s expectations. Practical updates to the facilities management contract include clarity on the duties and roles of maintenance and repairs—with a full scope of work with standards and guidance for ongoing facilities maintenance. For example, the current building management contract scope of work does not include maintenance of safety of play spaces and the only required service outside the buildings is the mowing of lawns and limited snow removal at PPSD facilities.

Aligning building management systems is another priority as the City plans for the return of PPSD to local control. The City is working to implement a system where all buildings, whether at the City of Providence or at PPSD, may communicate when there are mechanical issues. This will allow Department of Public Property staff to be alerted when there is an issue and will enable better decision making, as well as priority setting and potential savings and revenue streams by combining portfolios on procurement and energy contracts. In the future, the City must determine how to manage safety of play spaces. Staff must be certified to inspect playgrounds. The City also sees an opportunity for pre-apprenticeship programs with the Department of Public Works and Parks to address these workforce needs.

The City of Providence should also have access to PPSD Facilities’ work order system. Currently, the City and PPSD have two different systems, and this approach may continue as long as the City and the Department of Public Property have access to the District’s system.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT OF PPSD

Approximately 70 percent of the City of Providence’s energy consumption is attributable to PPSD occupied facilities. As the City plans for the return of PPSD to local control, there should be a uniform energy management plan that benefits the City, PPSD, and Providence taxpayers. The plan should feature joint procurement efforts for energy supplies and services including electricity, natural gas, renewable energy installations and renewable energy credits that benefit both parties. For instance, for fiscal year 2025, the City is providing the school district with \$3 million in solar net metering credits to offset the energy costs of the District, but a long-term agreement is needed to help the City meet its sustainability goals.

FACILITIES

Another step towards facility management includes integrating building management systems, which will allow the City and its Department of Sustainability to access PPSD operational data to identify real-time cost saving strategies, and to enroll qualified high energy use buildings in revenue-generating RI Energy demand management programs. Enhanced communication between the District and the City about their shared energy management needs will also be required.

Implementing Providence's Energy Efficiency and Carbon Neutral Ordinance at PPSD occupied facilities will be an enormous task, one that will require a dedicated energy management staffing at PPSD. This staff person will need to work with the Department of Sustainability's energy managers to ensure that the City meets its carbon neutral goals, and that all energy usage and cost savings opportunities are identified, captured, and reported. As the schools return to local management, PPSD staff will receive sufficient training and technical support to manage and integrate their energy bills with the City's existing energy management information system. They will also receive training on how to operate and maintain facilities with energy management best practices.

Decarbonization Plan Implementation at PPSD

The reduction and elimination of carbon emissions from PPSD occupied buildings will take place on two separate tracks. Track 1 is through RIDE-sponsored rebuilding program of Providence schools. Track 2 will be implemented through a decarbonization plan the City Department of Sustainability is currently developing:

- **Track 1:** With the support of RIDE, 76% of PPSD school facilities are being renovated under a multi-year plan funded through a bond. RIDE will reimburse the City for its expenditure of bond proceeds on eligible projects, up to 91% of the project costs, as long as projects are fully electrified and made solar ready. Additionally, the City has launched a solar pilot program to place roof-top solar arrays at the three recently renovated schools—William D'Abate and Frank Spaziano Elementary Schools and Narducci Learning Center. The clean, carbon-free energy these systems provide directly to the schools will reduce the buildings' carbon footprint while simultaneously lowering utility bills.
- **Track 2:** The City's Department of Sustainability is developing a Building Decarbonization Roadmap to identify cost-effective pathways to reduce energy-related emissions from City buildings. This roadmap will focus on 120 buildings owned by the City of Providence, including all PPSD-occupied buildings. The roadmap will include information on each building's energy use and energy system, develop goals, and a roadmap report to help the City reach its goal of phasing out fossil fuels in all municipal buildings and achieve carbon neutrality in public buildings by 2040. The Road Map will include a greenhouse gas inventory, establish an energy usage baseline, and set measurable goals.



FACILITIES

PROVIDENCE GREEN SCHOOLYARDS

A well-designed green schoolyard plays a crucial role in fostering students' academic, social, and emotional growth while cultivating a culture of innovation. Thoughtfully designed learning spaces—both indoors and outdoors—enhance engagement, creativity, and overall well-being, providing students with dynamic environments that support their development. Many schoolyards in Providence are in poor condition, with large areas covered in asphalt that hinder learning, physical activity, and positive social interactions. These outdated spaces do not meet the needs of 21st century learning, and many require significant upgrades to realize their full potential as areas that foster creativity, engagement, and student well-being.

The challenges are compounded by the negative effects of unsustainable development and climate change. The lack of tree canopy and an abundance of paved surfaces contribute to extreme heat, raising concerns about student comfort, the impact on learning, and the cost of heating and cooling. Additionally, the absence of permeable surfaces exacerbates polluted stormwater run-off and urban flooding, damaging property and disrupting access to schools. Many schoolyards also lack safe outdoor spaces for learning and physical activity, which can contribute to behavioral challenges. Moreover, some schoolyards are located on land that requires environmental mitigation.

Green schoolyards are an innovative solution to transform the learning and physical environments of Providence schools. The vision is for Providence school grounds to become vibrant centers for 21st Century education, promoting children's health, well-being, and social-emotional development, while also contributing to the health of the urban environment.

Providence has already made strides in transforming schoolyards. Since launching the initiative in 2019, the City has invested over \$3.5 million in schoolyard improvements, with notable projects at Bailey Elementary School and Baxter Park, Harriet and Sayles Park near Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School, Joslin Park near William D'Abate Elementary School, and Father Lennon Park near Harry Kizirian Elementary School serving as models for future efforts. Improvements have included outdoor classrooms, green infrastructure, and creative play equipment. In the coming year, two additional new schoolyards will be built at Richardson Field, which neighbors Young Woods Elementary School and Roger Williams Middle School, and Cabral Park near Vartan Gregorian Elementary School.

The City is also partnering with RIDE through its Learning Inside Out initiative, which prioritizes schools most in need of funding for schoolyard habitats. Multiple City departments and PPSD are also collaborating on the Providence Connecting Children to Nature team, ensuring that community input from children, youth, and families and caregivers informs ongoing efforts. The team is working to update the City's Implementation Plan, ensuring that the transformation of schoolyards continues in a meaningful, inclusive way.

Through these collective efforts, Providence is poised to transform its schoolyards into vibrant, sustainable spaces that contribute to the health, well-being, and educational success of its students, while also benefiting the health and climate resiliency of the broader community—and most importantly, allowing for continued play and learning for our children at and near their schools.

CONCLUSION

The City has conducted a thorough internal review of all systems and internal operations and community engagement to manage PPSD. This transition plan demonstrates the City's preparedness to integrate District operations and outlines specific priority actions to support PPSD in providing a world-class education to every student. Even though the City is not presently involved in day-to-day operations of the District during the State intervention, we remain engaged with and support the District in many significant ways, including through the City's annual funding for PPSD, implementation and project management for PPSD's capital plan, annual investments in out-of-school learning initiatives, and creation of professional development for student outcomes focused governance for the Providence School Board in partnership with RIDE and PPSD. These investments in our public schools show the City's continuing commitment to PPSD and demonstrates the City's role within the District.

The City is ready and eager to manage the District starting in July 2025 for the 2025-2026 academic year. This is an opportunity to implement our vision for a world-class Pre-K to 12 education where every student has the resources to succeed—and to center community voices as we plan for this next phase of public education in Providence. Our vision for world-class education at PPSD will be supported by a system that values equity, access, and high standards for both students and educators. In partnership with the Providence School Board and the District Superintendent, the City will build a stronger, more responsive school system for our students—with PPSD student achievement and deepening family and caregiver engagement remaining at the center of these efforts.

Our robust community engagement strategy showed that the community echoes the City's urgency for local management of PPSD—most respondents felt that the District should return to local control in the near future. The return of PPSD to local control presents an opportunity to address long-standing systems, operations, and governance hurdles at the District—some of which have gone unaddressed by leadership at PPSD, RIDE, and the City for decades. The City does not take this responsibility lightly. We have already begun to address priority action items for the transition of PPSD to local management outlined in this report. When the City resumes management of the District, Administration staff are prepared to implement the priority actions to address critical issues related to deepening family and caregiver engagement, supporting learning at PPSD, governance, funding and finances and City of Providence budget support, supporting talent at PPSD, procurement, data sharing and data management systems, and facilities to achieve the goal of building a stronger, more responsive public school system for our students and a fulfilling professional experience for our educators.

The City's 2024 Community Engagement Report informed the priority actions for effectively integrating PPSD back into city government and addressing the concerns from our school community. This plan prepares the Administration for the next phase of this work in partnership with RIDE, PPSD, the Providence School Board, and the Providence City Council to develop a comprehensive transition plan with clear roles and responsibilities for each government partner. This transition plan will stem from the work of RIDE's Collaborative Stakeholder Working Group and includes leadership from RIDE, PPSD, the School Board, Mayor's Office, and City Council. RIDE Commissioner Infante-Green will present the final transition plan to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education for review and approval in June 2025.

The City seeks to bring all partners to the table to offer a high-quality and personalized public education to every student in Providence. Achieving the goals of the Turnaround Action Plan will require deep partnership with PPSD, the Providence School Board, RIDE, and the whole school community. The City is ready and eager to manage our schools as early as this summer and looks forward to continuing this important and significant work in partnership with PPSD and RIDE.

Together, we are one team, working towards a shared purpose: Offering a world-class education here in Providence—where schools are places of joy, where students want to learn and where educators want to work.



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY
CITY OF PROVIDENCE