

Together4PVD: Solutions for Transformative Education Justice in Providence

Providence schools are at a crossroads. We have a choice: We can finally begin the authentic engagement, sustainable solutions and bold investments for students, families and educators—or continue on with failed policies that leave most Providence students and families behind, waiting on promises never fulfilled. **We are Together4PVD, and we are fighting for the schools Providence deserves.**



1. Community Schools That Value and Support the Whole Child

Community schools as a school transformation intervention **requires commitment for sustainable investment and an embracing approach** of public schools, in stark contrast with current deficit and austerity narratives. Our schools are communities, and when our communities struggle, **we all pitch in to make it better**. From Oklahoma to California, and from Cincinnati to New York City to our neighbors in Pawtucket, this model has demonstrated success in closing achievement gaps, increasing attendance and increasing family engagement. Some elements of community schools:

- a. **Implementing a school needs and assets assessment.**
- b. **Creating collaborative decision-making structures** with parents, students and educators.
- c. **Transforming school culture with a high-quality curriculum and relevant, embedded professional development.**
- d. **Investing in school-based, not-for-profit wraparound services** to support the whole child and family. Examples from around the country range from on-site dental, eye and mental health services to housing assistance and citizenship clinics, among other family supports.



2. Modern, Safe and Welcoming School Facilities

Providence students and families have seen how little our city and state value education almost every day, based on the terrible condition of Providence school buildings, from literally crumbling physical infrastructure to a lack of basic supplies and resources, such as toilet paper or internet sufficient for a school's needs. This problem isn't new, but **the pandemic has highlighted the dire need to renovate and build school facilities that are modern, safe and welcoming.**

a. Fully funding **facilities repair and maintenance.** The state approved \$278 million in capital investment in Providence schools in 2018-19, but that amount fell far short¹ of the \$532 million that a 2017 report by Jacobs and Cooperative Strategies estimated² was needed for facilities investments in our schools.

b. Providing **transparent, consistent community engagement** whenever schoolwide facility decisions are to be made.

c. Investing in **internet in school buildings and continued support of home devices and internet.**

d. Ensuring **every school is safe for public health.** From continued monitoring of ventilation to ensuring lead-free water fountains, our schools mustn't harm the health of students, families and educators.



3. Policies for Anti-Racist Hiring, Professional Development and Curriculum

Per a February 2021 Annenberg Institute report,³ on average for each teaching position that the Providence Public School District posted externally between the 2017-18 and 2020-21 school years, our district received less than half as many applications as the national average for teaching positions. The district's track record on retention—after cutting peer mentor and new educator supports—is even worse. **To truly change our schools, the city and state must invest to grow our own and collaborate with educators on relevant, anti-racist professional development and curriculum.**

1 http://media.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/PPSD-Analysis_EY_12.12.pdf

2 <https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Funding-and-Finance-Wise-Investments/SchoolBuildingAuthority/RIDE%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

3 <https://www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/AIB%20-%20PPSD%20Attracting%20Talent%20Brief%20-%20February%202021.pdf>

- a. Making **bold and sustainable investments in Providence and statewide teacher pipelines**, from Grow Your Own programs for students to supporting teacher assistants, our larger community and other career changers in transitioning to teaching.
- b. **Hiring peer educator coaches** to help support and retain educators we already have.
- c. Supporting **curriculum and professional development that reflect the breadth of our PVD community**.
- d. Committing to **building an anti-racist school culture** throughout staff and administration, through educator-led affinity groups and school-site collaboration.



4. Investing in Multilingual Learners

Despite federal orders to do so, PPSD has failed to support and invest in multilingual learners (MLL) for far too long. **Providence must make MLL students a priority, beginning with these steps:**

- a. Ensuring **smaller MLL class sizes**.
- b. Supporting educators in creating a **district-supported, accessible pathway for additional MLL licensure**.
- c. Hiring and retaining significantly **more MLL educators**.
- d. Providing consistent, embedded, **high-quality MLL professional development**.



5. Creating a School Culture of Family Engagement

Successful school communities empower and involve families at every level—not just for bake sales or school celebrations. **The shift to a school culture of family engagement requires more shared decision-making, more communication and more resources, including designated staff:**



- a. Implementing **strong, democratic, decision-making school site councils** that include students, parents and educators.
- b. Hiring **bilingual school family liaisons**.
- c. Providing **translation and interpretation services at every school**.



Read more on the evidence and research on each of these proposals at together4pvd.org.



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