

FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS POLICY

BELIEFS AND COMMITMENTS OF THE PROVIDENCE SCHOOL BOARD

Purpose	To focus the comprehensive reform and restructuring of the Providence Public Schools on success for all students.
Issue	<p>Providence, like all urban school districts, faces challenges in educating all our students to lead successful lives. Many of these challenges are beyond our control and require changes in public policy. But we will not use what is beyond our control as an excuse for not doing everything within our control.</p> <p>Urban schools have a unique opportunity and obligation to help every student—regardless of race, income, family support, first language, or prior educational advantage—to realize the American Dream. We embrace that opportunity and obligation. Education is a right. We take seriously our moral obligation to see that every student receives the education that is their right.</p> <p>Public schools, unlike businesses or nonpublic schools, do not choose whom to serve. We serve all our students—rich and poor, majority and minority, students whose families have prepared them well for school and students who have never attended school, students whose families came to our country generations ago and students who have just arrived. Our diverse population challenges our ability to serve students and their families as never before. But we treasure our diversity as an asset: our students benefit when they learn together and from one another.</p> <p>Our schools can and must make an enormous difference in our students' lives, but they cannot do it alone. The entire community—schools, district, families, partners, business—is collectively responsible for the success of our students. Our schools must serve our community, and our community must support our schools. School support for community and community support for schools increases our social capital and ultimately the success of our students.</p> <p>For too long, our schools have failed too many of our students and driven out those with means and other options. Performance has improved over the past five years, but our students continue to perform at the lowest levels nationwide, and the disparities by race, socioeconomic status, and first language persist. The Providence School Board is determined to change that. Providence schools must become schools of first choice, not last resort, for all our families.</p>
Core Values	Respect, equity, excellence, accountability, and appreciation for our diversity
Vision	The Providence Public School district will be a national leader in educating urban youth.
Mission	Providence Schools will prepare all students to succeed in the nation's colleges and universities and in their chosen professions.

Beliefs and Commitments

1. **We believe all Providence students can and must learn at high levels, reach their full potential, and succeed in school and in life**

We believe—

- ✓ The potential to learn is neither fixed at birth nor determined by race or socioeconomic status; it develops over time with opportunity, challenge, and effort.
- ✓ Success includes not only academic achievement, but also social, emotional, physical, psychological, and moral development.
- ✓ Success means contributing to our society and participating in civic life.
- ✓ Schools must cultivate a love for learning, teach students how to learn, and help students develop their talents .
- ✓ Disparities in academic achievement along racial and economic lines are morally intolerable.
- ✓ Expert instruction, adequate time, and the right support can help every student succeed.

We commit to creating the conditions for all students to learn at high levels and to their full potential; we commit to closing the achievement gap.

We will—

- ✓ Challenge every student and hold all students to the same clear and high expectations.
- ✓ Create active, vibrant learning communities with strong academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular opportunities.
- ✓ Measure student success by what is learned, not just by what is taught.
- ✓ Provide students with multiple opportunities and options to succeed.
- ✓ Create trusting and respectful school communities.
- ✓ Promote student health and wellness.
- ✓ Form strategic partnerships with external organizations to enhance student support services.

2. **We believe Providence teachers and Providence schools can and must have a positive influence and a profound effect on our students' lives.**

We believe—

- ✓ The student-teacher relationship is central to learning.
- ✓ The effective teacher assumes responsibility for what happens in the classroom and accountability for what each student learns.
- ✓ Ultimately it is the teacher who makes the difference between student success and failure.
- ✓ Schools exist to support the student-teacher relationship; the district exists to support schools.

We commit to organizing our schools and all our resources to support the student-teacher relationship as the primary factor in student success.

We will—

- ✓ Have a highly effective teacher in every classroom.
- ✓ Have a strong instructional leader as principal of every school.
- ✓ Set policy and allocate resources by asking how our decisions will help students learn.

3. **We believe Providence schools can and must be good places to teach and good places to learn.**

We believe—

- ✓ Schools must be safe, caring, and orderly environments that nurture effective teaching and learning.
- ✓ Schools must value diversity among students, staff, and families.
- ✓ Students, staff, parents, and community partners must demonstrate truthful, moral, and nondiscriminatory conduct.

We commit to creating schools that have positive cultures and are housed in high-quality facilities.

We will—

- ✓ Maintain attractive, clean, and secure schools
- ✓ Renovate or replace buildings as necessary to accommodate 21st century learning and serve as community anchors.
- ✓ Hold students, staff, parents, and community partners to clear and high standards of behavior.

4. We believe the Providence school district can and must be a high-performing organization.

We believe—

- ✓ People and purpose drive high performance.
- ✓ We must capture the hearts and minds of our people with a clear and compelling vision for student success as well as opportunities for participation, collaboration, teamwork, and shared decision making.
- ✓ We must have visionary and distributed leadership and a relentless focus on results.
- ✓ We must deliver measurable results in return for the commitment of public resources.

We commit to organizing the Providence School Department around its core business—teaching and learning.

We will—

- ✓ Hold the entire district and everyone in it accountable for student success.
- ✓ Target resources strictly to district priorities.
- ✓ Recruit, develop, support, and retain the highest-quality personnel.
- ✓ Operate effective instructional and business systems.
- ✓ Use public resources efficiently.

5. We believe Providence families and the entire Providence community can and must support our students' success.

We believe—

- ✓ Families are the first teachers of our students.
- ✓ Our community has rich cultural resources to support the education of our students.
- ✓ The school system and the community are mutually accountable to one another for student success.

We commit to partnering with family and community in shaping and supporting the education of our students.

We will

- ✓ Welcome and engage families and community as valued partners and advocates for education.
- ✓ Establish good home-school communications by providing friendly ways for parents to contact us and by communicating with families in clear, straightforward language.
- ✓ Provide a range of ways for families to participate in the education of their children at home and in the schools.
- ✓ Partner with the community to connect schools, students, and families with community assets.

History Adopted: November 22, 2004 Resolution # 11-22-04
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