

# Providence Public School District **2022** Facility Reassessment



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# OVERVIEW

**Providence Public School District (PPSD) and the RI Department of Education (RIDE) recognize that school facilities are a critical part of any improvements and have committed over \$500 million to rebuild the district's aging schools.** Providence youth spend more time in schools than any building other than their homes. They deserve 21st Century learning environments that are clean, safe, secure, and inspiring - and our plan is to create state of the art facilities that meet the promise and ambition of the Turnaround Plan.

PPSD and RIDE are embarking on the next phase of a historic plan to rebuild the capital city's crumbling schools. Every decision must be based on sound data and best practices in educational facility planning, including consideration of enrollment, capacity, utilization, facility conditions, security, and suitability for the creation of 21st Century learning environments. Together, these data points help guide decision-making with the goal of dramatically improving the quality of educational environments our Providence students learn in every day.

# TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

PPSD, the City of Providence, and RIDE understand that in order to maximize the impact of every dollar spent on enhancing learning spaces, decisions must be made that are focused, cost effective, and impactful. To that end, the goal is to improve learning environments for as many PPSD students as possible. Although the data points to distinct challenges - such as aging infrastructure, climbing costs, educational alignment - these identified issues also present opportunities to guide investments toward cost effective and educationally appropriate projects. In particular, the combination of aging infrastructure and declining enrollments presents an opportunity to improve utilization and place more students in 'newer and fewer' schools by closing facilities that are in the worst shape, or which are the most expensive to renovate. **“Newer and fewer,” which has been embraced by several communities across Rhode Island, is a framework encouraged and incentivized by state law (RIGL 16-7-40(h))** which provides additional state aid for consolidation projects.

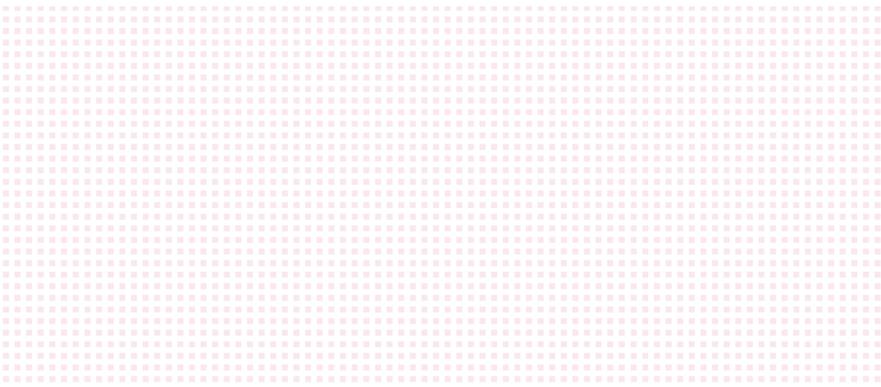
This approach, which has helped realize successful school projects across Rhode Island, helps put an end to expensive and inefficient “Band Aid” fixes by replacing old, crumbling buildings with fewer new ones. Data driven decisions have led to investment in schools that were not replacement candidates - for example Pleasant View and D’Abate Elementary - while replacing schools with FCIs that make them replacement candidates (>60%) - like Fogarty Elementary which has an FCI of 95%. In doing so, the district can ‘right size’ its buildings to serve their current and projected populations in buildings that are better suited to provide 21st century education. **This approach also allows for a foundational shift to more schools that provide Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade (PreK-8) services, in response to community feedback and research on the educational benefits of PreK-8 schools.** In Providence, work is already underway to invest in schools, create inspiring learning spaces, and shift toward the Pre-K model.

## **New and Like-New Facilities and Plan Highlights:**

- The new **Narducci PreK-8 Learning Center** (former Windmill Street School), set to open in spring of 2023 as a district-wide swing space, allowing students to learn in a modern facility while their own school is being renovated.
- A \$20 million complete renovation of **Hope High School's** auditorium, set to open in spring 2023 to serve Hope students, arts programs, and the wider community.
- A renovated, like-new **William D'ABate Elementary School** set to open in fall of 2023.
- A new **PreK-8 Spaziano** Campus that will provide a 21st Century learning space opening in fall of 2023 for grades PreK-5, and expanded in 2025 for grades 6-8.
- Renovation of **Classical High School classrooms**, set to be completed in fall 2025.
- A renovated, like-new **Pleasant View Elementary School** set to open in fall 2024.
- A new **PreK-8 Mary Fogarty School** campus, set to open in spring 2026.
- A new **PreK-8 Harry Kizirian School** campus, set to open in fall 2025.
- Providence elementary schools are scheduled to have a 21st Century media center in place by September 1, 2023.

In addition, a **\$50 million capital revolving fund has been created in partnership with the City of Providence** to address basic facility needs district-wide such as boilers, gym floors, and building improvements.





# **DATA HIGHLIGHTS and OBSERVATIONS**

The review of the Providence school facility data reaffirms basic assumptions that educational stakeholders have observed, but also helps shine a light on issues that must be centered in long-term planning . The data included herein highlight aging school facilities in poor conditions, declining enrollments, and the need to invest in learning environments to equip students with 21st Century skills and help them be successful in the classroom, career, and beyond.

## Elementary Schools - Data Highlights

The average age of Providence elementary schools is approximately 75 years and includes 10 facilities that are more than 90 years old. The identified deficiencies for all the elementary schools add up to more than \$400M, with an average Facility Condition Index (FCI) (of 57%, which is close to the FCI replacement benchmark. In fact, 9 elementary schools are at or above the 60% threshold and 6 of those 9 schools are above 80% - indicating a high degree of disrepair.

The average utilization at the elementary schools is 88% when using the Functional Capacity metric assigned by the State as part of the 2017 Statewide Assessment. As enrollments decline, the elementary schools will likely begin to see underutilized facilities within the 5 year planning window.

Just as critical to the planning considerations is the feasibility of making improvements that are aligned with best practices in the planning and design of 21st century educational facilities. Unfortunately, the majority of the elementary schools have building configurations that do not make them conducive to the educational program goals of the district. Most of the remaining elementary schools can be renovated to align with current pedagogical practices, but would require major renovations.

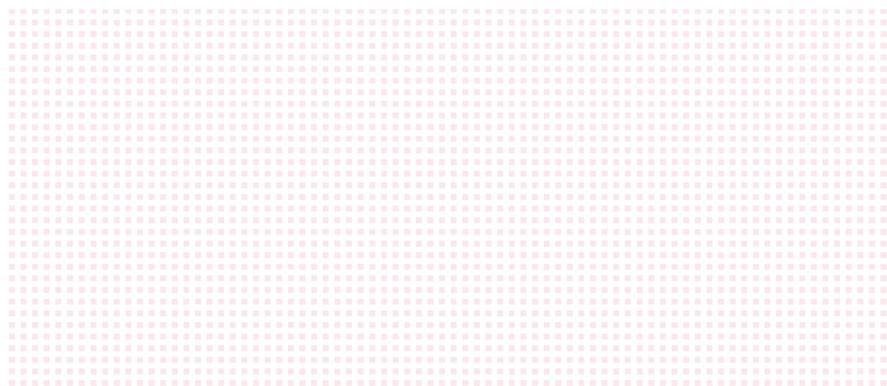




## **Middle Schools - Data Highlights**

The middle school buildings are an average of 88 years old - the oldest of the grade level groupings. In fact, with the exception of Del Sesto (built in 1999), all the other middle schools are more than 90 years old. Given the age of these buildings it should not be surprising that they require extensive improvements totaling approximately \$227M to address identified deficiencies. In fact, with the exception of Del Sesto and Nathan Bishop (renovated in 2010), all other middle schools have FCIs that are around 50% or above, which is approaching the replacement candidate benchmark (60%) established by statute.

Although the average utilization at the middle schools is approximately 87%, the expected enrollment declines will likely result in underutilization within the 5 year planning window.

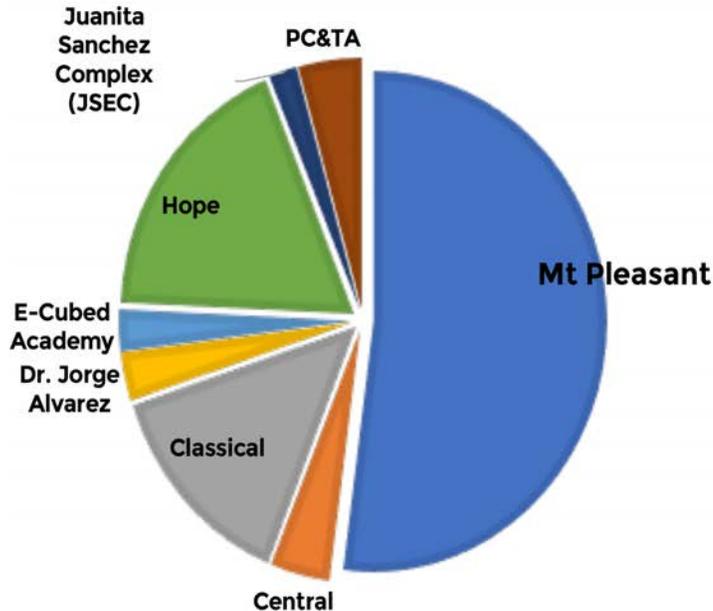


## High Schools - Data Highlights

The average age of PPSD high schools is 50 years and collectively they have a relatively low FCI of 28%, which is a far better average condition than the elementary and middle schools. In addition to several newer schools, Central High School - the oldest facility at 100 years old - underwent a major renovation about 20 years ago, and Classical and Hope High School - two of the three next oldest - both have planned capital investments in the pipeline. However, Mt. Pleasant High School, which is 85 years, is the only school with an FCI of 86%. Mt. Pleasant High School accounts for \$151M of the total \$277M of deficiencies identified for all PPSD high schools.

The average utilization at the high school level is 91%.

**TOTAL DEFICIENCY ESTIMATE (2017 - 2022)**



School Name	Total Deficiency Estimate (2017 - 2022)
Mt Pleasant	\$151,070,895
Central	\$11,788,146
Classical	\$40,278,711
Dr. Jorge Alvarez	\$9,014,286
E-Cubed Academy	\$7,500,444
Hope	\$52,523,160
Juanita Sanchez Complex (JSEC)	\$5,509,026
PC&TA	\$12,434,329
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$290,118,997</b>

# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The data collected shines a light on several major challenges that will inform the planning, including: aging school facilities in poor conditions, declining enrollments, and the need to invest in 21st century learning environments.

## **Aging Buildings in Poor Condition**

**The average age of the Providence schools listed in the report data sheet is approximately 70 years old.** In 2017, the State conducted an assessment of all public-school buildings and gave each facility a score between 0% and 100%. Any building graded with a score over 65% was considered a “replacement candidate.” **Providence was found to have over 10 with Facility Conditions Index Scores (FCI Scores) over 65%, including several over 80%.**

When planning improvements, it is critical to understand both the conditions, but also the cost. PPSD has over \$900 million in building deficiencies throughout its 40 schools. As documented in the report herein, this cost has increased by approximately \$300 million - from \$600 million in 2017 to \$900 million at present, which points to deteriorating conditions and the need for timely action. Furthermore, the district spends \$6 million a year in utility bills and another \$20 million a year on cleaning and maintaining our buildings -- many of which are over 100 years old. Given the enormity of the work and cost, **there is a clear need for new and transformative projects that break the pattern of chasing repair projects** with limited resources.

## Historic and Projected Enrollment Decline

The Providence Public School District has seen a decrease of more than 3,000 students over the last five years - a decline equivalent to the size of Johnston Public Schools - a district with just 7 buildings. Over the next five years, enrollment projections suggest that PPSD will lose another 3,200 students, the equivalent of Lincoln Public Schools - a district with 6 buildings. This means that the 2028-2029 student population may be almost 6,200 students less than before the pandemic - from 23,000 to 16,800

### PPSD enrollment by grade band, SY2017-SY2030<sup>1</sup>

Grade band	2016-2017	SY23 (current year)	SY30 Estimate	Difference SY17 to SY30	Percent Difference
Elementary (K-5)	11,104	8,695	7,206	-3,898	-35%
Middle School (6-8)	5,225	4,376	3,670	-1,555	-30%
Hight School (9-12)	6,713	6,948	5,954	-759	-11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,042</b>	<b>20,019</b>	<b>16,830</b>	<b>-6,212</b>	<b>-27%</b>

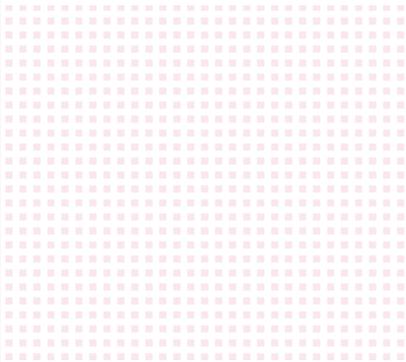
**-3,023**  
**students**

**-3,189**  
**students**

<sup>1</sup> Does not include Times2 Academy and ACES Academy  
Source: Providence Public School District; Rhode Island Department of Education

## 21st Century Learning Environments

Every decision must be centered on how to drastically improve the teaching and learning that happens in our schools, and is the very purpose of all our work. Educational practices have changed dramatically in the past 15-20 years alone - for example, with the increased integration of technology - not to mention in the past 50-100 years. As noted previously, many PPSD buildings were built more than five decades ago -before World War II, and therefore do not lend themselves well to be adapted to support 21st century learning practices in a cost effective manner. **It is critical that any investment in schools must also improve the learning spaces in order to align the buildings, their systems, and even the furniture to effective current and future teaching and learning practices and approaches.**



While \$900M is required to address basic building deficiencies, it would cost more than \$2.1B to fully rebuild current PPSD schools into 21st century learning spaces

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For detailed assessments of all  
Providence Schools facilities, please visit  
[rebuildpvdschools.com/facilities-report](https://rebuildpvdschools.com/facilities-report)



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