

Membership  
Update



March 5, 2012

From the President...

## Innovation Schools

To date, there have been eleven (11) Providence schools identified as persistently low achieving (PLA) schools — Hope High School (2004), Perry Middle School (2007), Sackett Street Elementary (2010), Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex (2010), BJ Clanton Complex (2010), Roger Williams Middle School (2010), Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School (2011), Gilbert Stuart Middle School (2011), Carl Lauro Elementary School (2011), Pleasant View Elementary School (2011) and Mt. Pleasant High School (2011).

As such, each school has had to devise school reform plans that conform with one of the four reform models under the No Child Left Behind Act (Transformation, Turnaround, Restart and Closure). The identification of which reform model to be utilized at each PLA school is made by the Superintendent of Schools and approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Since the identification of the first PLA school in 2004, the Providence Teachers Union has been actively engaged in the process in order to ensure that teacher voice is an integral part of the reform model selection and school redesign process. It has always been our position that reform should be done “with us” not “to us.”

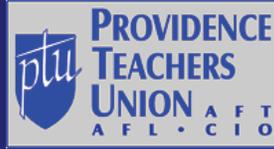
All teachers at the eleven PLA schools were provided with an opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to commit to school reform and remain in the school. Most teachers remained in the school, while some opted out and some were asked not to return after a recommitment process. In no case, has a teacher at a PLA school lost his/her position with the district.

While changes at these schools have certainly been disconcerting, they have not been the draconian measures experienced by teachers in other school districts. For example, in 2010 Jefferson County, KY, had 13 of the 22 public schools identified as PLAs. All 13 schools replaced up to 50% of their teachers.<sup>1</sup> In Boston, MA, the school district identified the Turnaround model for 12 schools requiring 50% eviction of teachers and providing the Superintendent with right to make additional staffing changes at those schools. The conditions to remain in one of the 12 Boston Turnaround schools includes, 180 hours of added classroom time without compensation, 30 hours of additional PD without compensation, no salary step advancement for anyone with an unsatisfactory evaluation and no seniority and/or attachment rights for anyone in an underperforming school.<sup>2</sup> In both of these examples, what is clearly missing is teacher voice. The PTU has had a constant voice since 2004. Ensuring that measures taken at PLA schools are based on true school reform geared toward student success and not simply punitive measures against teachers.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.courier-journal.com](http://www.courier-journal.com)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.BTU.org](http://www.BTU.org)

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On February 23, 2012, the Commissioner of Education formally approved United Providence (UP!) as the educational management organization (EMO) to lead school reform at Carl Lauro Elementary, Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School. UP! is a labor-management collaboration between the PTU and the PPSD. This initiative, the first of its kind in the nation, is rooted in the belief that strong labor-management relations are a foundational element for school success.

The RI Foundation has acknowledged UP!'s commitment to reforming schools by giving UP! a grant in the amount of \$100,000. UP! is also in the second stage of consideration for a grant from the AFT Innovation Fund. It was noted by the AFT that UP!'s grant request was among the most creative idea submitted and has the potential to be nationally innovative.

The creation of UP! is another example of the PTU's commitment to achieving student success through collaboration and a strong teacher voice in areas such as curriculum, school climate and culture, scheduling, and professional growth.

## 2012 Hiring Season

On Tuesday, March 6, 2012, the first internal Hiring Fair will be held at **Central High School from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** Over the last week, hiring committees have been actively screening applications and extending interview invitations for the first round of hiring (March 6 and March 10). Upon receiving an invitation to interview, teachers may schedule an interview on either date during an available timeslot.

Please note that teachers must provide a copy of their certification at time of interview.

Detailed information with respect to the processes for all phases of the 2011-12 hiring season has been electronically mailed to all PPSD administrators and teachers. PTU staff members will be available at all Hiring Fairs at Central High School.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the Union office should you need assistance with PATS or have questions regarding the hiring processes.