

The Voyage

Paul Cuffee School A Maritime Charter School for Providence Children Summer 2012 Vol. 10 Issue 1

Welcome

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING Nancy Cresser as the new Principal of Paul Cuffee Middle School and Wendy Randle as the new Principal of our Elementary School. We are thrilled to include these talented and experienced leaders as part of the Cuffee community. Both were hired after an exhaustive national search that resulted in a pool of exceptionally qualified applicants.

A graduate of Stonehill College, Ms. Cresser earned a Master of Education at the University of Utah in 1990. She taught social studies in a number of schools before enrolling in the Principal Residency Network. In addition to teaching, she has served as an associate for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and as a research assistant for Brown's Education Alliance. Reviewers glowingly supported her candidacy, noting in particular her determination, her thoughtfulness, and her eagerness to collaborate in building strong communities.

Having served as a first grade teacher in Newport, as Principal of a K-5 elementary school in Somerset, Massachusetts, and as Principal of a grade 3-8 elementary/middle school in South Carolina, Ms. Randle is an experienced and versatile educator. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in administration of



Wendy Randle (left) and Nancy Cresser bring energy, enthusiasm, and a commitment to service and community to their leadership roles at Paul Cuffee School. Ms. Randle is the new Elementary School Principal, and Ms. Cresser is Principal of the Middle School.

justice, politics, and Spanish from Salve Regina, a Bachelor of Education in elementary education from Roger Williams University, and a Master of Education in school administration from Providence College. She has also completed coursework in educational leadership at Northeastern University. Ms. Randle's reviewers favored her inexhaustible energy as well as her deep desire to build community.

Our new Principals arrive at a time of excitement and expansion at PCS. Our students' performance on standardized tests continues its impressive rise (see page 3). Our academic, arts, service, maritime, and other activities are garnering regional and even national attention, with both students and teachers earning recent awards. This fall will see the addition of our first 11th grade class. In addition, we're working on turning a vacant lot into a multipurpose outdoor play space, with help from a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

We could not be more pleased to welcome two such accomplished leaders to help guide our continued progress. Both embrace the idea that leadership begins with service. In the short time that they have been members of our community, they have exhibited a willingness to learn, a desire to understand and respect our culture, and a strong vision for the future.

Michael C. Obel-Omia
MICHAEL OBEL-OMIA, HEAD OF SCHOOL

In addition to welcoming new leadership to our community, PCS warmly welcomes our new students, chosen by lottery on March 1. Pictured here is incoming kindergartener Rubykate Turbi, enjoying ice cream and a new book as she joins classmates at the New Student Orientation.



Students Debate Global Warming

SIXTEENTH CENTURY ESSAYIST Michel de Montaigne opined, "There is no conversation more boring than the one in which everyone agrees."

He might have added that disagreement and debate are part of how we learn; and so a typical day at PCS found eighth graders engaged in a lively discussion of global warming. Mr. Chen, the humanities teacher, and Ms. Alvarez, the science teacher, had collaborated to prepare students for a thoughtful discussion on the effects of global warming on a variety of industries and peoples.

Using as a basis for discussion the essential question, "How do choices affect individuals, communities, and the world?," students spoke on behalf of various interests, such as the gas and oil industries, the World Health Organization, the transportation industry, and the Inuit people of Alaska. Each group was required to use reliable sources to gather scientific evidence as well as information on economic, historic, and technological impact and advances. The groups argued persuasively about whether global warming exists, who or what may have caused it, and what solutions or steps should be taken to address any associated risks.

The debate is one of many examples of the project-based learning that occurs daily at PCS and prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and habits that will position them to succeed in their future educational and career endeavors.

That there were few moments of concord during the debate highlighted the fact that the conversations were exciting, informative, and fruitful. Michel de Montaigne would have approved. 🐋



PCS 8th graders Duwan Eguez (top) and Dorothy Windham (bottom) debate the effects of global warming on society and industry.

Wish list

Among the ways our community helps enrich the school is through donations of items large and small that teachers have identified as aids to student learning. Here is our fall wish list.

☐ **Grade 3**

iPod docking station: \$35

☐ **Grade 5**

57 Reading Regatta shirts for 2013: \$6 per shirt

☐ **Elementary School Library**

Flip Ultra Camcorder, 2nd generation, 120 minutes, for grades K-5: \$159.99

Annual Brainpop video subscription: \$500

☐ **Technology**

Projector, audio equipment, and mounting hardware to be installed in the gym for use by K-5 PE classes and all school functions: \$2,500

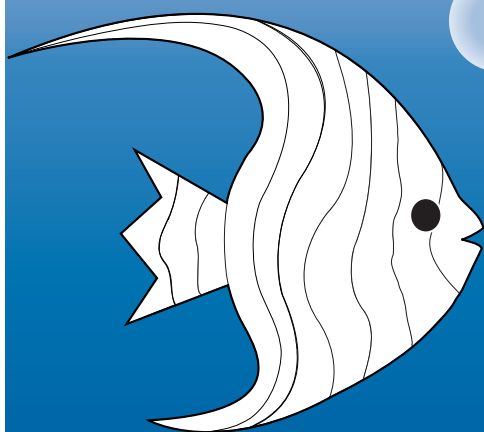
Projector for the cafeteria: \$600

Projector for the conference room: \$600

20 thin client computers for the elementary school computer lab: \$500 each

HP color laser printer: \$800

Your Annual Gifts Enrich Our Students' Education



Your tax-deductible contributions make it possible for us to continue the many enrichment programs we offer to enhance our students' education.

Annual Fund donations finance books and other resources, guest speakers, field trips, summer programs, and other curriculum-enrichment activities.

You can donate online at www.paulcuffee.org or send your contribution to Paul Cuffee School Annual Fund, 459 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.

For more information, contact Kathleen O'Halloran at kohalloran@paulcuffee.org or 401-453-2626.

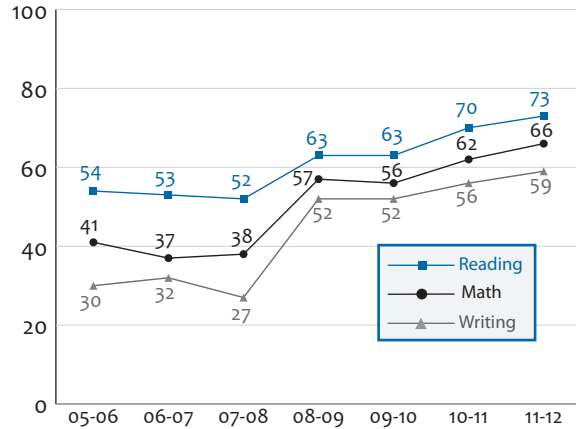
NECAP Test Scores Still on the Rise

We are proud to report that Paul Cuffee School's scores on the standardized NECAP tests have risen for the third straight year.

We are grateful to our **hard-working students**, our **outstanding teachers and staff**, and our **dedicated volunteers** for contributing to this success.

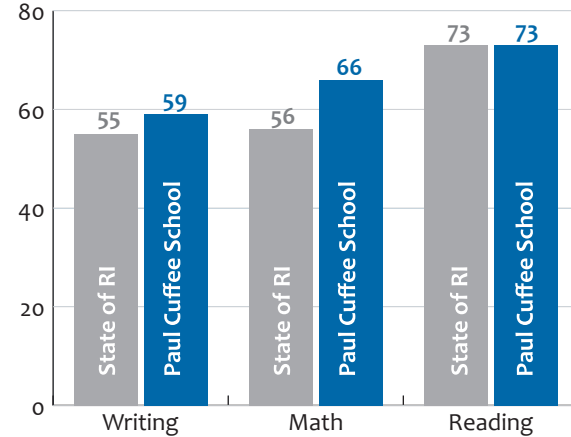
NECAP Results for Paul Cuffee School

(Combined % of students proficient and above)



Comparison of PCS and RI Scores, 2011-2012

(NECAP % of students proficient and above)



PCS Wins EPA Grant for New Field

Background photo shows plans for the new field.

Paul Cuffee School has been awarded a highly competitive grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to redevelop land for a new parking lot and athletic field. The field will serve as a year-round learning, teaching, and play space for students. National and state officials traveled to PCS in May for an award ceremony.

We love our volunteers

Our school volunteers make a huge difference in the lives of our students. They may come three times a week or just once or twice a year, but each feels the value of being part of the children's education.

There are so many ways you can help! Here are a few:

- ♥ translate documents
- ♥ tutor or read to students
- ♥ give to the Carol Montrond Book Clubs
- ♥ attend a special event
- ♥ volunteer at our yard sale
- ♥ sew costumes for the school play
- ♥ sponsor or chaperone a field trip
- ♥ support our library
- ♥ sponsor an enrichment program
- ♥ fulfill a wish list item

Your involvement matters!

To learn how you can volunteer, contact Kathleen O'Halloran at kohalloran@paulcuffee.org.



Service is part of learning at PCS. Here Ms. Brackett, Director of Wellness at PCS Middle School, and a group of students engage senior citizens at Oakhill Nursing Home in a craft project. Left to right: Leslie Brackett, Gabriella Cardenas, Fiona Carey, Aimee Martinez, Luna Abreu-Santana, Catherine Cardenas, and Salina Tong.

We're Upgrading Our Website!

PCS is building a new site to accommodate our growth and our huge variety of activities and resources.

Key information can be found on our temporary site at www.paulcuffee.org. If you can't find what you need, please give us a call at one of these numbers:

Elementary School: 401-453-2626

Middle School: 401-453-2711

High School: 401-781-2727




Summertime, and the learning is easy

by Kathleen O'Halloran

WHEN PCS FOURTH GRADER LUKE TAYLOR woke up on July 5th, he asked a question that might be considered unusual for a student on summer break: "Can I go to school?" Luke is one of ten students enrolled in Lego Robotics, a three-week pilot program led by Brown engineering majors, who teach the students to build and program mobile Lego robots. Students create robots that speak, follow labyrinthine pathways marked by masking tape, and sense and respond to their environment.

PCS students are enterprisingly engaged in a wide range of summer programs, including writing programs, basketball camps, music workshops, and collaborative programs such as the Young Actors Summer Institute at Trinity Rep Theatre, Brown Summer High School, Great Books, the RI Urban Debate League, St. Andrew's School, and Construction, Engineering and Green Design Academies at Rhode Island College. Some programs are subsidized by grants, while others are privately funded by our generous donor community.

Erika Sanzi, Paul Cuffee High School Dean of Student Affairs, notes, "For many of our students, summer can mean multiple months without structure, plans, or even learning. The programs and opportunities made possible by the generosity of so many not only fill the kids' days in positive ways but have the potential to change the trajectory of their lives. If we are to lift these kids up, it needs to be all year round. We are grateful for the partnerships we have forged to make that possible for so many students." 

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Paul Cuffee School

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Providence, RI

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www.paulcuffee.org



PCS 11th grader Bryeshia Jennings honed her writing skills at Rhode Island College's Rhode Island Writing Project Summer Institute.



Middle School students Kimberly Cuellar and Indira McCall test the buoyancy of their hand-made boat during Westport River Day.



Brown University engineering student Raymon Baek helps PCS 3rd grader Carlos Alfaia fine-tune his robot, dubbed "Bob," during Lego Robotics.



11th grader Leidilen Monteiro attended Girls Rock! Rhode Island Camp, which empowers girls by helping them tap into their creativity and develop music skills.