

ANGÉLICA INFANTE-GREEN
Commissioner



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JAVIER MONTAÑEZ
Superintendent

Providence School Board
Providence Public Schools
797 Westminster St
Providence, RI 02903

14 May 2024

Attention: President Rogel & members of the Providence School Board

The Providence School Department respectfully requests that the Providence School Board support the allocation of \$25,000 from the Edward Hinkley Bradford Scholarship Trust to support the Providence Promise program. This funding will go towards supporting college savings for Providence Students. We have also attached a letter from Mayor Smiley that is in support of this request.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Javier Montañez", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Javier Montañez



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Dr. Javier Montañez
Providence Public Schools
797 Westminister St,
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Letter of Support to Designate Funds from the Hinkling Bradford Trust to Providence Promise

Dear Dr. Montañez:

I write this letter of support asking Providence Public Schools to designate \$25,000 of funding from the Hinkling Bradford Trust to Providence Promise.

Providence Promise is a parent-driven partnership that supports the post-secondary aspirations of children attending Providence Public Schools (PPSD). Best known for their initiative to have PPSD families open a College Savings Account (CSA) as a pathway to assist their children in financing their education beyond high school, Providence Promise offers a multi-faceted approach to address structural barriers to post-secondary education. Furthermore, helping PPSD families overcome the most significant barriers that prevent them from saving and planning for college lies at the core of their mission.

Providence Promise's mission to ensure that PPSD students aspire to and may afford education beyond high school furthers the City of Providence's commitment to provide educational opportunities for all of our children, from birth to the post-high school years. I respectfully ask that you include designate \$25,000 from the Hinkling Bradford Trust to Providence Promise.

Sincerely,

Mayor Brett P. Smiley
City of Providence

**PROVIDENCE
PROMISE**
A PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

January 18, 2024

Angelica Infante Green, K-12 Commissioner of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dr. Javier Montañez, Superintendent of Providence Public Schools
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Edward Bradford Hinkling Trust

Dear Commissioner Infante Green and Superintendent Montañez,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal in support of a \$25,000 renewal of funding from the Edward Bradford Hinkling Trust. Providence Promise has received funding through the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust for the last six, consecutive fiscal years (\$30,000 in FYE 18, \$20,000 in FYE 19, 20, 21, 22, and \$25,000 in FYE 23). We are currently operating in FYE 24 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024).

Over the last seven years, Providence Promise has supported the post-secondary dreams of Providence Public School and Charter School children and their families by promoting high educational aspirations and more equitable opportunities for students. We do this by advocating for and facilitating 529 college savings accounts, a robust investment structure for families, and ongoing family and youth engagement programming and services.

Funding received from the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust has helped us grow significantly each year. Since the first award in FYE 18, our program enrollment has grown from just 40 students to now over 1,200 students, more than half of which are K-12 Providence Public School students. Students and their families have collectively saved over \$1.6M toward their future education. This school year (23-24), Providence Promise will increase enrollment to at least 1,300 students; increase cumulative college savings of families to \$2.25 million; expand our Family and Youth Engagement program services, of which we hosted 115 unique workshops, events and meetings in 2023; and more. As we continue to grow, this grant will undoubtedly help us to continue to fulfill the demand for our services.

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Providence Promise is grateful to have the support of Mayor Smiley, City Council members, and Treasurer Diossa, among others. Additionally, we've been working closely with the district's Family and Community Engagement team to establish a Memorandum of Understanding in an effort to most intentionally and effectively serve Providence Public School students and families.

Providence Promise is creating a college-going culture among students, their families and the community by supporting an accessible pathway to higher education, current K-12 outcomes and experiences, and parent/guardian engagement in students' educations. A grant from the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust will support access, opportunity, and a lifetime of prosperity for Providence Promise student's and their families.

Attached, please find a detailed request and supplemental documentation. Please contact me with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

Jim Vincent
Board Chair

Madalyn Ciampi
Executive Director

PROVIDENCE PROMISE

A PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Application to the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust

Providence Promise (PVD Promise) is a parent-driven partnership that is actively transforming post-secondary access for Providence youth. PVD Promise partners with families, education institutions, community organizations, and public and private entities to achieve its mission.

Mission

PVD Promise promotes high educational aspirations and more equitable opportunities for Providence Public and Charter School students by advocating for college savings and family engagement, increasing financial literacy, and reducing the financial burden of higher education.

Vision

To increase the K-12 and postsecondary success of Providence Public and Charter School students and to support a brighter future for students, their families, and the community.

The Challenge

Consistent, national research shows that there is a demonstrated need for college savings programs among low to moderate income communities. Low-income youth with \$500 in a College Savings Account (CSA) are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate than youth without; yet, traditional CSA programs remain largely inaccessible. A recent report cited that “less than 1% of families with household incomes under \$75K currently save in 529s or similar savings vehicles” (CommonWealth). Other benefits of CSAs include increased student and parent educational expectations, K-12 outcomes, early social-emotional development and child and maternal mental health, among many others.

Overview

Believing that all children are deserving of high-quality educational experiences, PVD Promise leverages a multi-prong approach to mitigate barriers to access for participants, a majority of whom are from historically underserved populations:

- Fosters relationships with families, working with them to open a 529 CSA for each child. PVD Promise supports families to navigate barriers to traditional CSAs, ensuring they feel fully informed of the process and the associated benefits. Families commit to save about 1% monthly.
- Invests alongside families in the CSAs of its students by providing a \$100 seed deposit, as well as incentivizing hundreds of opportunities through the Early Scholarship Program, up to \$250 per child, per month.

- Empowers families and students with the tools and resources they need to be successful in K-12 and post-secondary through robust, on-going Family and Youth Engagement Programs. Programming is bilingual in English and Spanish and community-responsive in that it is planned in partnership with member-led Youth and Parent Councils.

PVD Promise's approach is guided by local, regional, and national data, as well as member feedback. Currently, more than 1,200 students collectively have over \$1.6M in college savings. In 2023, PVD Promise enrolled 314 additional students, facilitated 115 unique workshops, events and meetings (one-third with partners), and provided \$287,000 in incentive awards directly to students' CSAs.

Recent Progress

PVD Promise received \$25,000 from the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust for FYE 23 ((July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023). During this time, PVD Promise achieved remarkable growth in enrollment, participation, and college savings. PVD Promise welcomed 345 new students (totaling 1,064 students), increased cumulative college savings of enrolled students to over \$1,300,000, allocated \$280,208 directly to student's CSAs in incentive awards, and hosted 100+ Family and Youth Engagement programs, collectively benefiting more than 2,600 participants. Notably, as the program continues to grow and as students age, we're seeing more and more students graduate from high school and begin their post-secondary education. In 2023, 18 enrolled students graduated high school and are currently enrolled in programs such as Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, University of New Haven, University of Rhode Island Vassar College, and Williams College. Aligned with our current, three-year strategic plan, we anticipate this trend in growth to continue.

The Request

PVD Promise has received support from the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust for the past six, consecutive fiscal years toward general program expenses. Most recently, PVD Promise was awarded \$25,000 for general operating expenses in FYE 23. Given the current and anticipated increase in our enrollment and program participation, PVD Promise humbly requests a renewal of \$25,000 to support general operating in FYE 24 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024). Areas of support include the following:

- Enrollment and outreach efforts
- Family and youth engagement activities
- Financial literacy training for students and families
- The Early Scholarship Program

These activities are aligned to our current strategic plan, of which PVD Promise is currently halfway through. By June 30, 2024, PVD Promise aims to increase enrollment to 1,300 students, grow cumulative college savings to \$2.25M, and award at least \$265,000 per year in Early Scholarship incentives.

PVD Promise is an excellent fit for the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust. PVD Promise is perfectly aligned with the Trust's goal to help Providence Public School students pursue a college diploma. The Bradford Trust details that scholarships will be granted to students, "without reference to excellence in

scholarship, but rather preferring those unable to obtain other aid; considering only diligence in the pursuit of education as manifested by regularity of attendance at school exercises, punctuality, cooperation with teachers, aid to indigent parents, work outside school hours, and willingness to make personal sacrifices; the said gift to be known as the Edward Hickling Bradford Fund for the relief of poor children." PVD Promise is open to all Providence Public School students and works with families and students to save for and plan for the future. Our services include supplemental learning programs and a robust Early Scholarship program, which provides up to \$250 per student/month in incentive awards to students' CSAs for both in-school and out-of-school activities that support current K-12 outcomes and future college and career success. Given this, a renewal of funding will certainly support our ability to continue to support the post-secondary education of Providence Public School students, as the Trust suggests.

Demographics

Enrolled families of PVD Promise are a diverse group of multicultural and multilingual families from across the city. Participants, who range in age from birth to high school seniors, include:

- 97% identify as BIPOC
- 89% are from households earning under \$60,000 per year
- 52% are age 10 or under
- 19% will be first generation high school graduates
- 74% will be first generation college graduates

In addition to students, we serve about 1,550 family members. The demographics closely reflect those of students, although we estimate gender composition to skew more heavily as female.

Organizational Commitment to Racial and Cultural Equity:

At its core, PVD Promise works to thoughtfully and intentionally break down barriers to high educational opportunities for historically underrepresented identities and promote pathways for families to access and engage in programming. High quality, bilingual, and culturally relevant programs are facilitated weekly both virtually and in-person at accessible locations. PVD Promise collaborates with member-led Parent and Youth Councils, intentional feedback channels created to center community voice and ensure that programming community needs and interest-aligned. Councils support Staff to set program topics, create meeting agendas, and give feedback on the structure and operations of programming.

PVD Promise Staff and Board of Directors reflect the demographics of the Providence community we serve. Staff is 86% female, 57% BIPOC and 57% multilingual. Our Board is 53% female and 59% BIPOC, and includes a Spanish-only speaker. A number of students and parents serve on our Board of Directors, informing our organizational strategy. Spanish interpretation is provided at all Board and Council meetings, and all materials are presented in both English and Spanish. PVD Promise maintains a diverse Staff and Board by creating robust candidate pools that are at least two-thirds BIPOC and by seeking out candidates who emulate the values of the organization.

Evaluation

A nimble and community-responsive organization, PVD Promise is constantly evaluating programming and implementing new initiatives based on the current interests and priorities within the communities we serve. In the short-run, PVD Promise measures its progress by tracking:

- Demographic information;
- Quantitative enrollment and participation data;
- Qualitative survey and focus-group responses;
- Early Scholarship incentive awards across categories;
- Quarterly college savings of participating families; and,
- Strategic Plan progress, informing current and future decision-making.

In the long run, PVD Promise is also leveraging new ways of tracking and measuring program data and coordinating with researchers at Brown University to understand our impact over time.

Testimonials

An important measure of success for PVD Promise is the testimonials received from students, parents/guardians and partners about the impact of our programming on the community. A few recent testimonials from PVD Promise members and partners are included below.

“When I hear PVD Promise, I hear opportunity, I hear access, I hear less stress” - Parent

“Since I signed both of my children up for Providence Promise I have become part of a solid, extraordinary foundation which provides so much self confidence, leadership and guided support throughout and to the completion of college”. - Parent

“Providence Promise has helped me feel more comfortable for what I want to do in the future and has helped me better understand how I’m going to achieve my goals.” - Student

“Providence Promise supports families in their efforts to plan and save for higher education for their children. This intentional planning, and their program of savings incentives, is a model that is grounded in an understanding of the importance of family engagement as the foundation for healthy development and academic success. Our collaboration has allowed for mutual growth in our respective client bases, deepened our collective impact on the community and supported our shared goals of engaging children and families in learning and enrichment experiences that support success in school and in life.” - Providence Public Library