Attendance Counts! Task Force

The city of Cranston is committed to working collaboratively to improve every student’s opportunity to a quality education by helping all students get to school on time and every day. With leadership from the Cranston Public Schools, we are committed to learning how chronic absenteeism affects student success, we are committed to informing others about the importance of school attendance, and we are committed to taking action to helping students in the city of Cranston get to school on time and every day.

We are the Attendance Counts! Task Force

Mr. Angiello is currently the chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Cranston Education Advisory Board. As the parent of three children, one of whom had Dr. Lundsten when she was an elementary teacher, Mr. Angiello has been actively engaged in volunteering to support all students in Cranston for ten years.

Ed Angiello

As the principal of William R. Dutemple Elementary School in Cranston, Ms. Beth Basile works with teachers, staff, families, and the students of Dutemple. She has worked for CPS since 1990 as a special educator for 12 years, a general elementary educator for 7 years, and a consultant for gifted and talented programming for 2 years.

Beth Basile

David Aulenbach is the Assistant Principal for Special Education and Related Services at Cranston East High School. Previously, Mr. Aulenbach was a Special Education teacher at the school.

David Aulenbach

Ms. Susan Buonanno is the principal at Gladstone Street School in Cranston. Previously, she was a principal in West Warwick for 5 years. Ms. Buonanno loves working with the faculty, staff and students.

Susan Buonanno

Dr. Rosemary Burns has been a member of the Cranston Public Schools community since 2012 as a school administrator and now as the District Data Coordinator. She is engaged in strategic planning, program evaluation and the coordination of the Attendance Counts campaign. Dr. Burns worked for the RI Department of Education as a Secondary Redesign Specialist and was a teacher for several years.

Rosemary Burns

Ms. Ayana Crichton is a 2006 cum laude graduate from UMass Amherst in Communications and Film. Ayana has co-managed a Day Camp; worked with college and high school students at UVC-TV 19; and ran an after school program for struggling schools with high risk students and provided staff professional development on best practices to enhance programming. She speaks basic Spanish and Italian to reach out to bi-lingual parents.

Ayana Crichton

The mission of Cranston Public Schools

In partnership with families and community, Cranston Public Schools will empower all students to achieve academic and personal excellence, exhibit persistent effort and live as resourceful, inquiring and contributing global citizens.
Mr. David Cushman is a 10th grade honors student who has not been late or absent to school all year. David is a member of the hockey and baseball teams at Cranston High School West. Mr. Cushman volunteers for the Tomorrow Fund to raise money for children with cancer.

As the Delta Outreach Coordinator for the Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center, Ms. Sarah DeCosta implements violence prevention programming for students, community members, and professionals in Cranston. She has spent a decade working in the domestic violence field, and has been with the EBC Center since 2009. Ms. DeCosta is a native Rhode Islander and photographer who majored in Psychology and Art.

Mrs. Susan DeRiso is a 25-year veteran teacher in Cranston Public Schools. She currently serves as a Reading Consultant, District Title I Facilitator, and Summer Literacy Coordinator. She holds a Master's degree in Reading and is well versed in scientifically based reading research. As a reading specialist, she has extensive experience in data-driven instruction, early intervention, and effective tiered systems of support.

Ms. Anthony Donovan is the Director of the Parent Training & Information Center at the RI Parent Information Network. Susan presents on topics such as special education regulations, parent resources, and transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities. Ms. Donovan served in her community as the Chairperson of the Special Education Local Advisory Committee for six years. She volunteers in her community and is co-creator and facilitator of Circle of Friends Club, a social group for middle and high school youth.

Ms. Toni Enright has been with the Comprehensive Community Action for 29 years and the Head Start/Early Head Start/Child Care Director for 13 years. Ms. Enright is responsible for three sites, 60 employees and nearly 260 children between the ages of birth to 5.

Mr. Ed Garcia has been the Director of the Cranston Public Library system since 2012, and joined the CPL in 2009 as Information Access Librarian. Mr. Garcia graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 2008. He is currently serving his second term on the Library Board of Rhode Island. Mr. Garcia is married with two sons enrolled in the Cranston Public Schools.

Jeff Gale is a member of the Cranston School Committee. Mr. Gale began his career in Washington, D.C. focused on reading and math for children grades K-3. Next, he worked for Jumpstart, a pre-kindergarten literacy program. As Director of Policy and Communications at the RI Afterschool Plus Alliance, Mr. Gale increased state support for afterschool programs. Presently, he is working to open Club Z, an educational service company.

Ms. Stephanie Geller is a Policy Analyst at Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, a statewide multi-issue children’s policy organization, where she is responsible for policy analysis, research, and writing on a variety of issues affecting the well-being of children, including education, poverty, family economic security, housing, and homelessness. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College and a Master’s in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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Mr. Robert Houston is the Senior Director at the YMCA of Greater Providence in Cranston. Mr. Houston has been a director at the Y for nine years. Presently, he plans, supervises, and delivers Out of School Time programming for teens and camp programs. Mr. Houston is a graduate of Rhode Island College.

Mr. Kanelos has just begun his career in Cranston as an Assistant Principal at Cranston High School West. Previously, he served as the Dean of Students at East Providence High School. While there, Mr. Kanelos was involved in reducing chronic absenteeism.

Elena Kwetkowski, DO is a board certified Family Medicine Physician who is currently working at Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP) based in Cranston. CCAP is a private, non-profit community action agency and one of Rhode Island’s largest organizations dedicated solely to fighting the war on poverty. CCAP offers a wide range of services designed to help those in need including health, dental, behavioral health. Dr. Kwetkowski has been a practicing physician at CCAP since 2004 and Medical Director since 2010.

Dr. Judith Lundsten is the Superintendent of Cranston Public Schools and began her career as an educator in Cranston. Dr. Lundsten considers herself the "first teacher" and "first learner" of the district. Importantly, as evidenced in the district mission statement, Dr. Lundsten believes that partners working together across the city will ensure all students having the best opportunity to come to school on time and every day.

Paula McFarland is the Executive Director of the RI Community Action Association, a member of the Cranston Public Schools School Committee and a life-long advocate for individuals who are underrepresented and underserved. A key goal of Ms. McFarland’s is to support the unification of strategies to eradicate poverty and support RI residents towards means of self-sufficiency.

Ms. McGunagle started at CCAP in 1979 as a youth center worker and became Executive Director in 1985. She holds a BA in Sociology and a Masters in Public Administration. Joanne is married to Ken McGunagle and has two daughters; Anne is 20 and studying social work at Wheelock College in Boston and Madalyn who is a junior at LaSalle Academy.

Ms. Nunez was born and raised in Cranston, attended Park View Middle School and is now a sophomore at Cranston High School East. Currently, she is involved in many extra-curriculum activities and, as she says, "I strive to create a better future for myself and those around me."

Ms. Rhonda Perrotta is an active member of the Parent Teacher Organization in Cranston where her two children attend, having served as Vice-President and President. She has also served as a member and Secretary of the Cranston Educational Advisory Board. Rhonda has been an educator for the past 22 years. Her teaching experience has been in Special Education and Social Studies and she has Masters in Education Administration from Rhode Island College.

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Ms. Vimala Phongsavanh is currently the Director of Programs at the Center for Southeast Asians where she directs community engagement programs. She served as the Chairwoman of the Woonsocket School Committee from 2009-2013 where she championed Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs), School-Based Health Programs and the development of a district-wide attendance policy.

Joseph Rotz is the Executive Director of Educational Programs for Cranston Public Schools. Presently, he is leading the development of a new technologically embedded curriculum that will revolutionize the way teachers, students and families engage with what students are learning. Previously, Mr. Rotz was the principal of Park View Middle School and Chester Barrows Elementary School. He began his educational career as an English teacher at Hugh B. Bain Middle School.

Ms. Grace Swinski is the Co-Coordinator of Cranston Family Center and COZ. Her mission is to promote successful school outcomes by supporting families with information and resources. Ms. Swinski advocates for parents as children's first and most important teacher and works to help them to be the best model. Ms. Swinski is on the CCAP board and a member of the Community Schools Leadership Network.

Dr. Michael Weiler is a Pediatric Neuropsychologist who is currently working as the PBIS coordinator (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) for the city of Cranston. Prior to working in Cranston, Dr. Weiler was an Instructor in Psychology at Harvard Medical School and the Supervising Neuropsychologist for the Learning Disabilities Research Center and Children's Hospital in Boston. Dr. Weiler has publications dealing with learning disabilities and attention disorders.

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