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## Providence groups launch 'Youth Caucus' to work with mayor on education priorities

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The new student-led coalition will unite young people from across Providence to work together for citywide education changes such as personalized learning, and a conflict resolution approach called "restorative justice," in which an aggrieved student meets with his or her aggressor and peers, with adult supervision, to resolve a dispute. The effort, which is supported by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, will initially bring together youth from the following organizations:

- Hope High Optimized
- New Urban Arts
- Providence Student Union
- Rhode Island Urban Debate League
- Young Voices
- Youth in Action
- YouthBuild Providence

Student leaders from each of these organizations will work closely with the new mayor of Providence to realize the goals described in "The Schools Providence Students Deserve," an education platform generated by youth for last spring's Youth Mayoral Forum.

Mayor Jorge Elorza said, "I am grateful for the passion and dedication to improving our public schools shown by Hope High Optimized, New Urban Arts, Providence Student Union, RI Urban Debate League, Young Voices, Youth in Action and YouthBuild. I look forward to working closely with the Providence Youth Caucus to ensure that all our children have access to world-class schools."

Students organized the April mayoral forum, and the student-designed platform, to draw attention to their education priorities. Said student speaker Priscilla Rivera back in April, "We believe it is so important for students to have a fair say and to have our voices heard."

Nick Donohue, president and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, agreed:

"We are a proud supporter of efforts to amplify the voices of young people, and involve students in decisions that impact their lives and their futures," he said. "The creation of the Providence Youth Caucus is yet another indicator of the power of this work, and demonstrates how Providence can be a model in mobilizing students for positive change in education."

By unifying diverse skillsets and student members across some of Providence's most active youth organizations, the Providence Youth Caucus is poised to be instrumental in elevating student voices and winning key student-centered improvements to schools.



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