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Henry Barnard School and Providence Country Day Partner to Offer Extraordinary Educational Opportunity for Rhode Island Students

HBS Parents Association Shepherds 122-year-old School into New Chapter with PCD

The new, independent Henry Barnard School (HBS) and Providence Country Day School will join together to offer an extraordinary opportunity for education in Rhode Island. The passionate and dedicated efforts of HBS parents and alumni to save the beloved school, facing closure at the end of this school year, have come to fruition. HBS will continue its 122-year legacy of exceptional early and elementary education through a historic partnership with the Providence Country Day School (PCD), an independent school in East Providence, R.I. with its own 98-year legacy educating students in middle and high school.

“I am excited to announce our partnership with Providence Country Day School,” stated Scott Bromberg, president of the HBS Parents Association. “I am especially thankful to the HBS community, particularly the dedicated staff, many alumni and devoted parents who volunteered countless hours toward finding a path forward for our beloved school. I would also like to thank Rhode Island College President, Frank Sánchez, and his staff for enabling the parents to pursue a path forward for HBS. We are proud to partner with PCD to continue in this shared vision of educating young learners for years to come. Thank you to Head of School, Kevin Folan, and the PCD Board for their vision and recognition of the valuable impact Henry Barnard School has made on young learners for decades.”

For many years, both schools have offered cohesive, high quality, personalized, hands-on instruction, providing a solid foundation for students’ success. This approach to education combined with a commitment to small class sizes and building diversity at all levels made the two schools a natural fit. The 2021-2022 school year will begin the journey as united schools offering a continuous PK-12 educational experience.

PCD’s Head of School, Kevin Folan, said a partnership between the two schools is mutually beneficial, “Opportunities like this do not present themselves often. This is a chance for two institutions with strong, century-old legacies of educating young people to come together to enhance and expand the incredible education each provides. I thank Scott Bromberg and the many HBS volunteers for their commitment to keeping this school moving forward despite the many challenges and for taking action on this opportunity. This is a once-in-a-century partnership and we are delighted to see what the future holds for our school.”

The Background

Rhode Island College (RIC) announced in summer 2020 that the Henry Barnard Laboratory School would close at the end of the current school year due to ongoing budgetary concerns. Hearing the news, a group of motivated HBS parents joined forces with loyal alumni to pursue innovative solutions intended to preserve the school’s legacy

of educating students across Rhode Island and into Massachusetts. The group would establish HBS as a separate entity from Rhode Island College (RIC), with the intention of creating a stable future for the school to thrive as an educational pioneer, and taught by HBS teachers who have inspired so many young minds. The goal was to ensure the new HBS continued the school's model of working with the unique strengths of each student, hands-on learning, collaboration, building diverse classrooms, ensuring small class sizes, adhering to high academic standards and a commitment to community. The decision to merge with PCD achieves this goal.

The timing of RIC's announcement last summer to close HBS was surprising to many, including the leadership at PCD. The subsequent stories about the parents and alumni working to save the school were also inspiring and created an interesting opportunity at an opportune moment for PCD. "The PCD Quest" had been unveiled to national acclaim in October 2020, detailing a bold initiative designed to build upon the philosophy that quality education should be accessible, personal, and relevant. PCD would engage in a year-long focus on how to move the school forward in a way that emphasized the core values of the institution. One such move was a tuition reset, which will lower tuition by 36 percent to bring the cost of the school to a more financially accessible level for local families.

The school also added a fifth grade to the student body in response to the many requests from families asking for an earlier entrance into PCD's enriching education model. Expanding the student body to include an elementary school was a natural next step in the bold strategy of the school, and the potential to join hands with the established and well-respected HBS was a wonderful opportunity. Both PCD leadership and the HBS Parents Association saw this as a natural fit and a unique opportunity, and so began the discussions that would eventually culminate in this partnership that meets the goals of both institutions.

Moving Forward to School Year 2021-2022

The Henry Barnard School name and traditions, representing an incredible legacy with generations of loyal alumni, will be retained as the school becomes the elementary addition to the existing middle and upper schools at PCD. HBS will remain in its existing school building on the Rhode Island College Campus while plans are being made to transition onto PCD's 30-acre campus in East Providence within three to five years.

The joining of the schools is being embraced with excitement by PCD's leadership and the HBS community.

"It's a natural fit for both schools," says Mark McLaughlin, Associate Head of School and Director of Strategic Partnerships at PCD, where he has worked for the past 30 years. "We have seen many graduates from Henry Barnard School matriculate to PCD over the years and find great success. It has always been a natural transition between our two campuses. This will just bring us together as part of the same school and provide additional continuity for families first starting school through high school graduation."

Folan will be the Head of School for all grade levels, PreK-12, starting this summer. HBS is in the process of identifying a new leader for the elementary school, who will work in conjunction with PCD's head of middle school and head of upper school to create continuity for students and families. The new position will report directly to Folan.

Applications are currently being accepted for enrollment for the 2021-2022 academic year preschool and elementary school students at Henry Barnard's existing location on the RIC campus, and for middle school and high school students at PCD's campus in East Providence, RI. Families interested in learning more may visit henrybarnard.org or providencecountryday.org/henrybarnard for more information on how to apply for PreK-12. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis as space allows, and all offers of admission from HBS will be honored through this partnership.

School Histories

Now entering its 123rd year, HBS has established a strong reputation for providing a personalized and collaborative approach to educating young learners in a welcoming and diverse community. Founded as a laboratory school, HBS enjoyed many years of success in training educators and developing innovative teaching models, inspired by the school's namesake – Henry Barnard, Rhode Island's first school superintendent, and a champion of accessible, high quality education. Our student-centered curriculum is guided by experiential learning and the tenets of respect, responsibility and community.

Founded in 1923, PCD is a college preparatory school currently serving grades six through 12, with the recent addition of grade five starting this fall. PCD's campus features newly renovated athletic facilities, dining facilities, a new turf soccer field, among other amenities which will benefit all students. With 30 acres of green space, PCD's campus provides ample room to accommodate the additional elementary school classes without impacting the small class sizes, close student-teacher ratios, and personalized experience that families expect from both HBS and PCD. Applications for PCD have doubled relative to previous years following the announcement of "The PCD Quest" in October 2020.

Henry Barnard School, with an anticipated opening in Fall of 2021, is not affiliated in any way with Rhode Island College.