PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SHINING BRIGHT HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS

Portsmouth Public Schools (PPS) has been named the **2026 School District of the Year** by Jumpstart, a national early education organization that provides language and literacy programming for preschool children.

The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation has named PPS a **2026 Best Communities for Music Education** for the division's leadership in advancing music education and expanding equitable access for all students.

Manor High School has been recognized for the second consecutive year as one of the **"100 Best W!se High Schools Teaching Personal Finance"** by Working in Support of Education (W!se) for excellence in personal finance instruction among its national network of roughly 1,000 schools in 49 states.

Cradock Middle School's Pauline Miringu was named a **Read 180 Educator of the Year**. She was selected for her teaching excellence, leadership and mentorship as well as incorporating effective student use of the Read 180 system in the classroom. Miringu was one of just two honorees in the state and 46 in the country.

STUDENT EXCELLENCE

CLASS OF 2026 GRAD FACTS

- There were a total of **300 honor graduates** in the PPS Class of 2026.
- **196 graduates** earned college credits through the division's First College program.
- **34 students** completed the Tidewater Community College Early College program, with **22 graduates** earning both a high school diploma and a completed associate degree.
- The PPS Class of 2026 earned **$18.6 million** in merit-based scholarships.
- The PPS Class of 2026 earned **1,508** industry credentials.

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AWARD-WINNING ADMINISTRATION

- PPS is one of just six school divisions in the state to be named a **Purple Star Division** this year by the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, meaning each school has an active **Purple Star School Designation**. This designation reflects the division's commitment to providing meaningful support and resources to military-connected students and families, ensuring each student is equipped with tools necessary to thrive academically.

PPS Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Library Media Services Jennifer Thomas has been named the **Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE) Leader of the Year**.

PPS Coordinator of Visual Arts April Taylor-Martin has been named the **Administrator and Supervisor Leader of the Year** and PPS Visual Arts teacher Jessica Kovalcik has been named the **Educator of the Year** by the Tidewater Virginia Regional Chapter of the National Art Education Association.

The Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administration Association (VIAAA) has selected PPS Coordinator of Division Athletics Shani Twyman for the **2026 Outstanding Service Award** and Waters Middle School Athletic Director Gabrielle Turner for the **2026 Middle School Athletic Administrator Recognition of Service Award**.

The PPS Department of Budget and Finance has again earned two national awards: the **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) and the **Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting** from the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO).

The PPS Department of Communications has earned **9 honors** as part of the 2026 National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) School Communication Awards. This marks the fourth consecutive year the department has been recognized for its work.

STUDENT AND STAFF LEADERS

- PPS Science Program Specialist Crystal Tyler has been selected to serve as the **Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) Region 2 Director**. VAST cites her exceptional contributions to science education and dedication to fostering students' love for science as key factors in this appointment.

2026 Manor High School graduate and Tidewater Community College Dual-Enrollment student Christian Bias-Saunders has been named the **2026 Virginia and D.C. Youth of the Year** by the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Virginia.

Four PPS high school students have been named to the **2026 Hampton Roads Workforce Council Top 20 Under Twenty list** - Sabrina Bass and Jy'Sland LeSane, from I.C. Norcom High School, and Andrew Hawks and Kenya Johnson, from Churchland High School.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To stay up to date with everything happening in Portsmouth Public Schools, visit **ppsk12.us** for news, updates and resources. For quick access to social media content, simply scan the QR code and follow along with the division's official channels.