



# Blood pressure report: Limit sodium, alcohol

INSIDE, 6A

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# Are McKee’s Learn365 projects working?



Teacher Melissa Rouleau works with third graders in August at the “Chillin’ and Skillin’ ” math camp at Villa Nova Middle School in Woonsocket, one of the programs funded by the Learn365 initiative. DAVID DELPOIO/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

**Patrick Anderson**  
Providence Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

WOONSOCKET – On an early-August Thursday here at Villa Nova Middle School, a signature piece of Gov. **Dan McKee’s** education policy is playing out between a dozen fourth graders, a rolled up ball of paper and a trash basket.

It’s called trashketball. The children are asked a math question, and correct answers earn them the chance to throw the ball into the bin. Most baskets wins.

And judging by the line of contestants stretching out the classroom door into the hallway, these Woonsocket kids know their math facts.

“It’s similar to school, because you’re still supposed to learn and pay attention,” said 9-year-old Mahalya Gonzalez describing the summer program. “But you don’t need do as much work and you aren’t here for, like, six hours.”

What do “trashketball,” and a problem-solving game going on in the classroom next door, have to do with the 2026 Rhode Island governor’s race?

The teachers bringing math and other curricula into “Chillin’ & Skillin’,” a free summer camp for 100 residents, are being paid with a grant from the McKee administration’s Learn365 program, the centerpiece of his 2030 plan and education agenda.

In an administration known for conti-

nuity rather than radical proposals and sweeping plans, out-of-school learning is McKee’s passion project.

It has been in his life since his father helped found the Cumberland Boys and Girls Club and he coached youth basketball.

The municipal learning academy he created as mayor of Cumberland is a model he sees for the rest of the state, and his effort to replicate these projects throughout Rhode Island stirred up the first political firestorm of his term.

In Learn365 and the related Community Learning Centers program, McKee has committed \$94 million so far with

**See POLITICAL SCENE, Page 2A**

## REGIONALIZATION

# Newport, Middletown schools could be on ballot again

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With Newport eyeing an Aug. 22 ribbon cutting for its newly constructed Rogers High School building and shovels in Middletown starting to carve out room for the town’s new combined Middle-High School, Newport and Middletown voters may be asked to again reconsider regionalizing their school districts through a special election as soon as April 2026.

“The difference this time is the new offer,” Councilor Jeanne Marie Napolitano said on Aug. 13.

Though a special election has yet to be officially called, the April 2026 date was first mentioned in a resolution Newport City Council passed on Aug. 13. The resolution, sponsored by Napolitano, sought to encourage the two communities to reignite discussions about regionalization ahead of this proposed deadline.

## What’s different about this new regionalization offer?

If a special election does occur and voters approve of the measure, the communities would consolidate their school districts’ administrative functions, retaining one superintendent, one finance office and one joint school committee. As proposed, the schools in each community would continue operating separately, retaining the same teachers and parents as have existed before the merge.

If voters are feeling a sense of déjà vu, it’s because they already voted on whether to regionalize the two communities’ school districts in November 2022. Though the measure was approved by over 64% of Middletown voters, 52.8% of Newport voters did not, resulting in the entire measure

**See EDUCATION, Page 3A**

# DC cracks down on homeless

## Move follows federal takeover of police force

**Christopher Cann**  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Under the blazing sun, people living in homeless encampments in Washington packed up their belongings before authorities moved in with garbage trucks on Aug. 14 as President Donald Trump’s crackdown on the nation’s capital ramped up.

At a camp a few miles from the Lincoln Memorial and the Kennedy Center, about eight people broke down their tents with the help of city workers and homeless advocacy groups.

“(The president) is targeting us and persecuting us,” said David Beatty, a man living in the encampment that Trump posted a photo of on social media Aug. 10. “He wants to take our freedom away.”

The moves came days after Trump

assumed federal control of the city’s police department and mobilized the National Guard, declaring a “crime emergency” and vowing to clear homeless people off the streets.

Cities across the United States, including longtime Democratic strongholds such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, have increased homeless sweeps and encampment closures. A landmark 2024 Supreme Court decision that permitted laws banning people from sleeping outside, even if they have nowhere else to go, led to a broad crackdown in dozens of cities, towns and rural communities nationwide.

This year, the U.S. Park Police has disbanded about 70 encampments from federal parks in the capital, said White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

The speedy operations came with little warning, and local officials and social workers sought to get ahead of the anticipated operations. In mid-August,

**See CAMPS, Page 2A**



Volunteers help people take down their tents and collect their belongings as city workers conduct a sweep of a homeless encampment on Aug. 14 in Washington. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

