



# THE CHARTER

*"Charting a course in educational innovation"*

Presented by  
The New England Laborers'  
Public Relations & Media Dept.  
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## *A Message from* **Armand E. Sabitoni**

Each new year at the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy we have created opportunities to open our campus to more students, more activities and more new programs. Our school has maintained a sharp focus on expanding our capacity to give more students the opportunity to engage in a different kind of learning environment. Our problem-based approach to teaching and learning promotes the essential critical thinking skills that employers and post-secondary educators want in a candidate for a job or for college.

Today, students can choose a pathway that suits their personal learning objectives. Our original Construction Craft Laborers' Program and subsequent LIUNA Apprenticeship program is an example of a truly successful program that seamlessly transitions a student from school to work. When a student finishes their Apprenticeship program, they can take advantage of another program LIUNA has developed with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), in which working craftsmen can continue their education and receive up to 20 credits for their work experience.

Our much heralded "World of Work" program allows students to explore different careers throughout their time with us and is another example of a very unique "pathway" program. We are extremely proud of the success of these programs and the attention they have garnered in many educational circles. School districts across the state have adopted this program and have taught it in their schools with our help.

In the past several years we have also worked with the school district through the AEP program to provide courses both day and night that allow students to recover credit. These courses are also open to students outside our pathway programs who are working on their GED or in Adult Education. Our school campus, open from early morning until the evening, is now the site of many community events, school fundraisers and career days.

I am enormously proud of how far our school has matured and how it has become an important part of our community since its birth eight years ago. This progression is a result of all the efforts on the part of our dedicated faculty, staff and certainly our students. I commend them for their commitment to working together with all our community partners to keep our school thriving and growing strong.



Sincerely yours,

Armand E. Sabitoni  
General Secretary-Treasurer & New England Regional Manager  
Laborers' International Union of North America

*A Message from*

## **RICHARD PECORELLI**

### **NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**New England Laborers'/Cranston Public Schools  
Construction Career Academy**



**As I embark on this new professional journey...we will continue to innovate, adapt and make changes to meet the new mandates that come our way, while serving the ever changing needs of our student body.**

**A**s I transition into my new role as the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy Executive Director, I am excited and motivated by the challenges that lie ahead for our innovative and successful Academy. While there are new requirements mandated by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, The Rhode Island League of Charter Schools, and Cranston Public Schools - we will remain committed to our mission of raising student achievement, setting high standards in our core subjects and meeting the academic needs of our diversified student population.

This year we have ramped up our core curriculum with a more rigorous and extensive Math and Science program to expand the depth and breadth of student knowledge. We have further expanded our literacy program for identified student populations with one-on-one coaching.

A cross-curricular approach to Financial Literacy continues to flourish at our school, as it is imbedded into every course in grades nine through twelve. We have been recognized by national leaders for this achievement as the only school in Rhode Island with such a broad-based approach to financial education.

Problem based learning continues to engage our students as they apply the concepts that are learned in the academic classrooms, the World of Work Program, the Construction Craft Laborers' program and art.

While students at the Construction Career Academy have continuously volunteered their time to worthy causes - whether it be constructing a handicap ramp at a community center (which you will read about in this Charter edition), or walking for breast cancer awareness - they are also working toward 20 hours of community service, a state mandate, by graduation. While this does not apply to seniors, it will affect all other underclassmen. The Construction Career Academy is working with Community Service Opportunities in Cranston to assist students in this endeavor we highly support.

As the New England Common Assessments Program (NECAP) mandates make their way through the pipeline, our students continue to score high on other alternative assessments such as Senior Electronic Portfolios and the LIUNA Training & Education Fund's Curriculum Assessment test. We strongly believe assessments such as these are of equal importance to NECAP scores.

As I embark on this new professional journey, I want to thank Armand E. Sabatoni, LIUNA General Secretary-Treasurer and New England Regional Manager & school co-founder, the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy Board, as well as administrators, faculty and staff for their support as we continue to innovate and evolve to meet the new mandates while serving the ever changing needs of our student body.

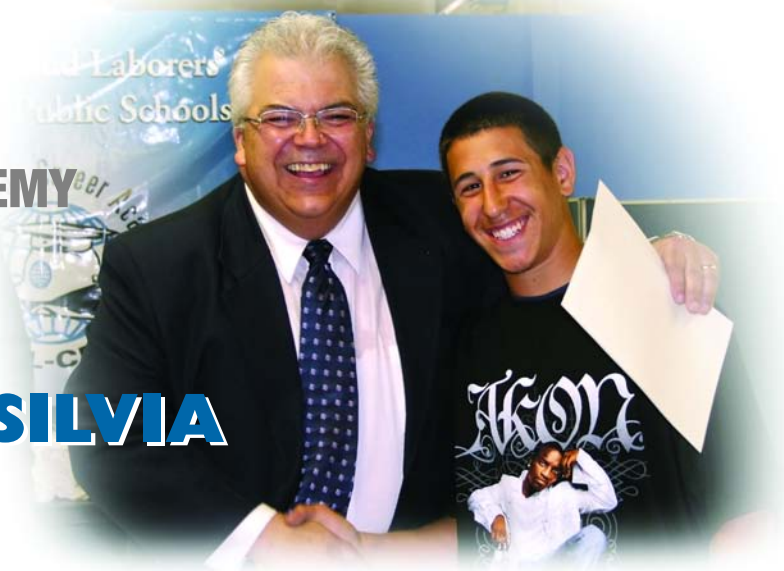
Sincerely yours,

**Richard Pecorelli**

*Executive Director  
New England Laborers'/Cranston Public Schools  
Construction Career Academy*

# CONSTRUCTION CAREER ACADEMY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RETIRES

## DR. MICHAEL J. SILVIA *A Class Act...*



For more than seven years, Executive Director of the New England Laborers'/Cranston Public Schools Construction Career Academy, Dr. Michael J. Silvia, LICW, PhD, has created a legacy of being a hands-on administrator, nurturing the school's family-like environment. Dr. Silvia - also affectionately called 'Dr. Mike' - is well regarded for ushering in a collaborative spirit among students, faculty, administrators and staff to meet the individualized academic and emotional needs of each student.

His vision of education has encompassed high academic standards with a unique experiential learning environment combining compassion, communication, creativity and teamwork. He has set the bar for his pride and respect for multi-cultural diversity, equality within the sexes, and overall tolerance for student differences, which have been imbued throughout the school.

The development of the Construction Craft Laborers' Program, successfully weaved into the school's academic curriculum, are among many of Dr. Silvia's achievements. The program continues to connect the students to LIUNA's Apprenticeship Program, providing them with a lifelong career path in the Construction Technology Industry.

Dr. Silvia has also been instrumental in the creation and advancement of the World of Work (WOW) program - the only program of its kind when first initiated

in 2004. The program exposes students to careers in numerous industries and also teaches critical soft skills needed to land and excel in the job market. The program has been so successful that it expanded into other school districts. In 2009, 91% of students in the Cranston Public School District enrolled in the program were placed in unsubsidized jobs.

During his tenure Dr. Silvia influenced the implementation of the Credit Recovery and Virtual Learning Programs. These programs continue to increase graduation rates and reduce drop out statistics. He has also assisted in broadening Cranston's Alternate Education programs, which are housed on the Academy campus.

Fortunately, Dr. Silvia's work will continue through his part time position as Development/Recruitment Coordinator. In this position, he will assist in the development of new programs at the Construction Career Academy and throughout the community. In fact, Dr. Silvia has developed the first diversified educational campus in the state, in which classes for both youth and adults will be offered throughout the day and during evening hours.

Armand E. Sabitoni, CCA Co-founder, LIUNA General Secretary-Treasurer and New England Regional Manager recognized his dedicated years of service. "I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Silvia for his commitment and loyalty to both the Cranston School Department

and especially the welfare of the students of the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy. He has been and will continue to be an invaluable asset to our school. We are delighted he has chosen to continue to work with us through his golden years."



Dr. Mike converses with Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education Deborah Gist at the Academy



# The NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy... A Model in Financial Literacy Education



(L-R) Dan Hebert, Northeast Regional Director, Jumpstart Coalition for Personal Literacy; Robert Scaffardi, CCA Program Coordinator; Marilyn Coppola, World of Work Coordinator; Gerard Dion, Literacy Specialist; Beth Martinelli, English; Mariann Capobianco, English; Michael Traficante, CCA Chairman of the Board of Directors

**“It all started when a math teacher assisted a group of students with their tax returns. They became riveted. The rest is history - or financial literacy history...”**

**C**onstruction Career Academy Program Coordinator Robert Scaffardi explained how the concept of financial literacy came to fruition at the Charter School during the 2010 Personal Financial Capability Conference. The professional development conference was recently held at the Rhode Island Convention Center for those serving high school students and low to moderate income adults.

During a school strategy roundtable, Mr. Scaffardi served as a guest speaker and

was asked to explain how financial literacy is successfully embedded into every class at the CCA - the only school in the state to take on this approach. The cross-curriculum method is uniquely implemented so that students in grades nine through twelve learn some facet of personal finance - whether it be in science, literature, or history.

According to a 2008 published report, only 6% of high school students in Rhode Island elect to take a course dedicated to personal finance. The roundtable discussion focused on strategies for the expansion of financial literacy

throughout the state's high schools. “Our seniors are out in the workforce, so they are dealing with W2 forms and taxes,” emphasized Mr. Scaffardi. “Financial Literacy is very relevant to them. That is one of the reasons why this multi-layer approach has flourished at our school.”

The Construction Career



Academy is certainly doing more than its share. In fact, this year, Financial Literacy has been added to the Academy's six learner outcomes. Moreover, students are encouraged to include it in their senior electronic port-

folio presentations, which are part of the state graduation requirements.

The other schools invited to present at the forum included Tolman, Chariho and Smithfield High Schools. The full day annual conference was organized by the Rhode Island JumpStart Coalition. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Education, state business leaders and the National JumpStart Coalition were also on hand for the event.



Math Coach Andrea Edwards works with a small group of students on a math concept.

## NEW MATH AND SCIENCE COURSES ADD UP TO BIG SUCCESS

**T**he Construction Career Academy is expanding the depth of its math and science programs by implementing a new and innovative curriculum. All 9th and 10th graders are enrolled in three problem solving courses. Freshmen receive instruction in Algebra I, Physics First, and Math Standards I. Sophomores are instructed in Geometry, Earth/Space Chemistry, and Math Standards II. The two newly designed Standards courses (Math Standards I and II) serve to reinforce the concepts taught in each of their respective grade level courses with Math Standards II also addressing course work from the Academy's Construction Math Applications class.

The Academy also expanded its Mathematics Department with the addition of Mr. Michael Iavarone, math

teacher, and Ms. Andrea Edwards, math coach. As math coach, Mrs. Edwards works with students who may need assistance in specific areas. All Academy mathematics teachers work with students in small groups to reinforce mathematical theories and meet the individual needs of each student.

To provide yet another level of support for students, the Academy's mathematics department has partnered with the Institute for Labor Studies and implemented an after school math program to assist participants in preparing for the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP) and the Apprenticable Trades Entrance Exam. The Academy's science department has also implemented a weekly "department night" to provide assistance to students who require more personalized instruction.



Math teacher Michael Iavarone assists a student with one-on-one support.



# Rhode Island Department of Education VISITS CONSTRUCTION CAREER ACADEMY

**T**he Chief Transformation Officer of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently toured the Construction Career Academy (CCA) to learn more about the innovative Construction Craft Laborers' (CCL) Program and its rigorous, accredited curriculum.

"We emphasized to Ms. Smith that the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary education should be willing to implement a complimentary assessment program to the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) that takes into account the school's unique mission," emphasized CCA Board of Directors Chair, Michael Traficante.

affiliated LIUNA Training Funds throughout the United States and Canada. Trainees must pass the post high school/adult assessment in order to receive certification. The course is accredited by the International Accreditation Service, Inc., (IAS) for Curriculum Development for Work Force Qualification Programs and Training Agencies - one of the most well respected accrediting agencies in North America.

**"In 2007, charter school students scored in the 94th percentile among their adult peers in the Laborers' Union."**

**Michael Traficante**

**Board of Directors Chair**

**NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy**

"For Construction Career Academy students, it should be based on LIUNA's training assessment criteria."

John LeConche, Executive Director of the LIUNA Training and Education Fund in Pomfret, Connecticut said, "LIUNA's construction curriculum meets the educational standards, all

"In 2007, charter school students scored in the 94th percentile among their adult peers in the Laborers' International Union of North America," Mr. Traficante added. "This is a significant accomplishment. We believe this assessment holds just as much weight as the NECAP scores."

Ms. Smith, impressed by the Construction Craft Laborers' Program, plans on returning to the Construction Career Academy to learn more about the Academy's other academic pathway - the World of Work (WOW) Program.

During her visit, Ms. Jennifer Smith sat down with school administrators and representatives from the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Training & Education Fund who explained the comprehensive nature of the trade program.

The CCA utilizes the LIUNA Training and Education Fund's accredited curriculum because of its comprehensive lesson plans and assessments that have surpassed strict validation requirements. Its math concepts are integrated throughout the Construction Craft Laborers' curriculum with students demonstrating and applying their math knowledge through hands-on activities.

while providing information that is relevant to the industry."

LeConche goes on to say, "It is critical for students who wish to pursue a career in this area to master the subject as well as skill sets. The curriculum also includes mathematical concepts and calculations that are applied during construction related hands-on projects and small group activities."

LIUNA's Training curriculum is implemented at more than 70



# NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy In The Community



(LR) Paul Volpe - Instructor, New England Laborers' Training Academy; Mike Perrotta - Construction Craft Laborers' Instructor; Anthony D'Antuono - Business Manager, Plasterers' & Cement Masons' Local 40; Joseph Vitullo, Jr. - Laborers' Local Union 271 Field Representative; Louis Fresolone - President, Cherokee Construction stand with students in front of the newly poured handicap accessible ramp.

## Walkway Brings Veterans, Students and the Construction Community Together

**W**hen the Construction Career Academy was asked to assist in building a handicap access ramp for a local military community center, students and instructors didn't hesitate to help. Under the direction of Construction and General Laborers' Local Union 271 Field Representative Joe Vitullo and Construction Craft Laborer Instructors, Mike Perrotta and Ray Johnson, several seniors in the Construction Craft Laborers' Program helped to complete the building of a 135 foot long ramp for the Rhode Island Military and Family Center. The Center, located in West Greenwich, provides educational and recreational programs for Military Service Members and their Families.

Over the course of several months, students worked on various phases of construction for the ramp including excavating, prepping and pouring concrete. Prior to the project, persons with physical disabilities were not able to access the building from the front parking lot.

The project came together when Christine Driscoll, M.A., Behavioral Liaison to the Rhode Island National Guard, reached out to Richard Eckler of Helmets to Hard Hats about the idea for a ramp. Helmets to Hardhats connects Veterans with careers in the construction industry.

Mr. Eckler then turned to Michael F. Sabitoni, President of the Rhode Island Building & Construction Trades Council and Business Manager of Laborers' Local Union 271. "When Mr.

Eckler told me about the dire need for a handicap ramp at the center, I brought it to the attention of our friends in the Building Trades who sprang into action to bring their expertise to the project," said Sabitoni.

Contractor partners Cherokee and D'Ambra Construction, as well as Cardi Corporation donated the materials for the project. The Building Trade affiliates involved who donated time and resources included Laborers' Local Union 271, Plasterers' & Cement Masons' Local Union 40, Operating Engineers Local Union 57 and Iron Workers Local Union 37.

Ms. Driscoll also expressed her gratitude. "Our facility is now fully accessible to all Active Military Members and Veterans.

What was a wish, shared with Mr. Eckler at a Yellow Ribbon Event for returning Service Members, is now a reality through the help of the



Rhode Island Building Trades, the Laborers' Construction Career Academy and the generous companies who donated the needed construction materials. Thank you so very much."

# NEL/CPS Construction Career



(L-R) - Back Row: Frenchtown Elementary School PTG co-presidents Julie D'Amico and Betsy Shimberg; Joseph Sabitoni, NEL TA Training Director; Ray Johnson, Construction Craft Laborer Instructor; Mike Perrotta, Construction Craft Laborer Instructor; Paul Volpe, NELTA Instructor. Front Row: Frenchtown Elementary School students

## LOCAL PLAYGROUND UPGRADED *Laborer Instructors 'Jump' Into Action*



**S**tudents at the Frenchtown Elementary School in East Greenwich, Rhode Island are enjoying their updated playground thanks in part to Construction Career Academy Instructors who v

olunteered their time over the spring. When the school's Parent Teacher Group (PTG) reached out for help in assembling and installing a Double Escalator Climber (Rock Wall) and a Disc Challenge with money they had raised, Laborer Instructors Mike Perrotta and Ray Johnson once again stepped up to the challenge.

Joseph Sabitoni, Executive Director of the New England Laborers' Training Academy (NEL TA) in Pomfret, Connecticut and Paul Volpe, NELTA Instructor, Volpe also volunteered their Saturday morning digging, mixing, and pouring cement to ensure the playground's additions were installed properly and safely.

"Because of their preparedness and hard work digging nine holes and pour-

ing sixty, 80-lb. bags of cement, the playground additions were installed safely and in half the time expected!" said PTG Co-President Julie D'Amico. "Thanks to the New England Laborers' and parent volunteers our students are now very much enjoying their new and improved playground."



Parent volunteers and Laborer representatives working hard to ensure equipment is installed properly.

# Academy In The Community

## COMMUNITY SERVICE..

### Not Just a Priority, but a Requirement

**T**his is the season for giving, and that's just what the Construction Career Academy students will be doing - if they aren't already - in the coming months as a new State Community Service mandate is enacted across Rhode Island's high schools.

While Charter School students are known throughout the state's communities for their volunteer efforts, the new mandate requires that all seniors must have 20 hours of community service by the time they graduate. This year's seniors are only required to have five. The full mandate will kick in with the class of 2012.

To help students fulfill their service hours, Serve Rhode Island in Providence recently made a presentation to senior students, detailing the many ways in which they can volunteer.

Marilyn Coppola, World of Work Coordinator, is in charge of assisting and helping students prepare for this new requirement. "Students have a myriad of interesting volunteer opportunities at their disposal; from acting as stage crew for the Traveling Theatre, to arranging flowers to raise money for AIDS orphans in Africa, to office work at the Big Sisters of Rhode Island Donation Center. It's a great way for them to learn how rewarding it is to give of one's self for a good cause and to help others in need."

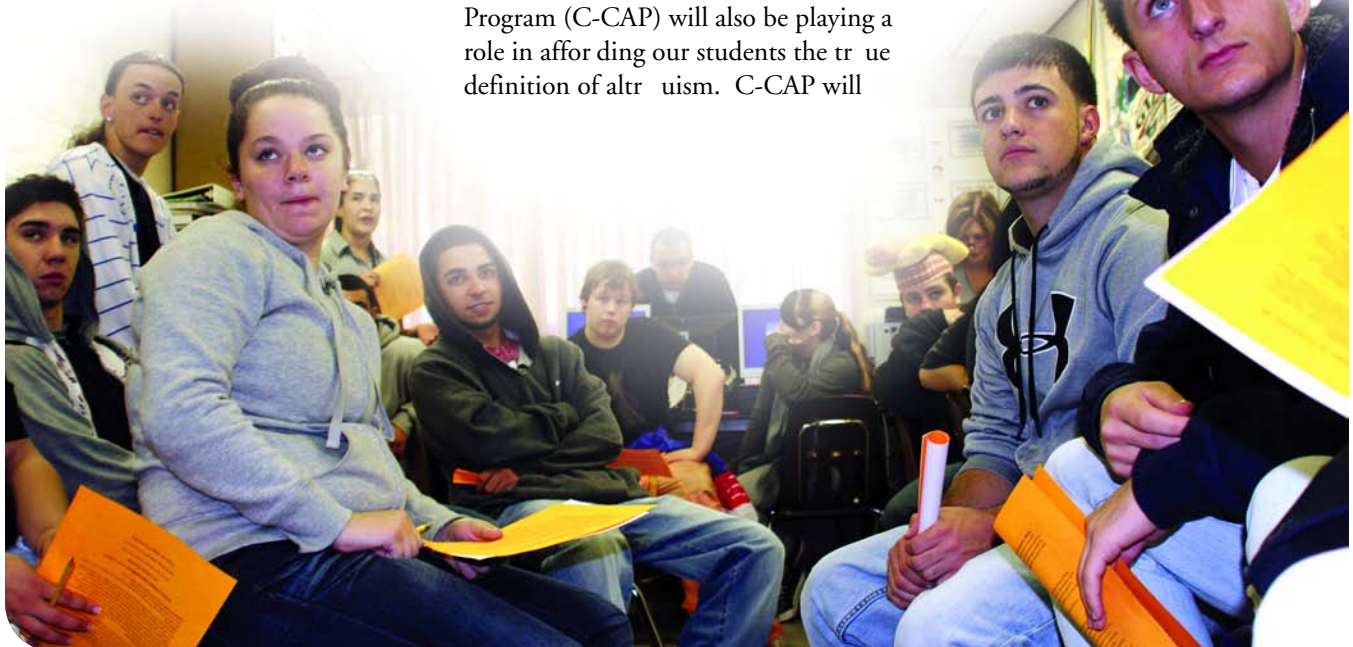
Cranston Community Action Program (C-CAP) will also be playing a role in affording our students the true definition of altruism. C-CAP will

help in the placement of some of our students throughout our community.

For more volunteer opportunities students can visit the following site: [ServeRhodeIsland.org](http://ServeRhodeIsland.org).



Far right: Emily McKenna of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA - part of Serve Rhode Island) explains to seniors the new regulations regarding community service.



Seniors look and learn through power point presentation that they must have an official letter from the organization they serve detailing the hours and work they performed.

# PROJECT DEMONSTRATION DAY 2010



WOW Coordinator Marilyn Coppola works with students on their group project for Project Demonstration Day 2011.



Academy student hard at work for this year's Project Demonstration Day

**“T**here is no need at all to hire an expensive marketing firm when you can tap into the talents and abilities of students who live in our own community.”

With that said, Mayor Allan W. Fung chose a new logo and slogan for the city, painstakingly designed and created by the students of the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy.

The winners were unveiled

during Project Demonstration Day at the Academy. The massive 3-D Demonstration was the students' vision of what the city would look like to accommodate a diversified culture.

Alexx Gonsalves of Providence took first place with her logo which was a vine wrapped letter “C”. The winning slogan went to Victor Roman of Providence. He split his prize with his friend, Kerri Salerno of Cranston. Roman came up with the slogan,



Art Teacher Jennifer Degregorio assists students with an artwork idea for Project Demonstration Day 2011

# Student-Created Logo & Slogan for the City of Cranston Unveiled

“Cranston - Proud Past, Promising Future”. Giving some of the credit to his friend, he said, “I wanted to say 'strong future' but Kerri was the one who came up with 'Promising future'.”

Both Gonsalves and Roman received \$500.00 for their creations. During the public event, community and business leaders viewed the work of students, as well as the student's city representation – called ‘Crancot,’ (a take on Walt Disney World's Epcot theme park),

built with all recyclable materials. Western Cranston featured a hotel; Oaklawn, a sports complex; Pawtuxet, a football stadium; Woodbridge, an amusement park; Thornton, a daycare center; Edgewood, a China-to wn style village and Knightville, a dirt-bike path.

The attractions were connected by footbridges to a bike path surrounding a multicultural community center.



LIUNA General Secretary-Treasurer & New England Regional Manager Armand E. Sabitoni and Mayor Fung look over students' group project plans last year



Mayor Fung and Art Teacher Christine UnderBaggage with the City of Cranston "Logo" winner Alex Gonsalves



Construction Craft Laborer Instructors Ray Johnson and Mike Perrotta stand with last year's project day participants

# Students Visit the New England Laborers' Media & Public Relations Department

**W**here does this edition of the Charter originate? Who takes the photos? Writes it? Lays out the design? Creates the graphics? Prints it? It's all done from soup to nuts by the talented, award-winning staff at the New England Laborers' Media and Public Relations Department.

Students recently toured the full service department that serves LIUNA's New England Tri-Funds. "Our department is charged with promoting our positive labor-management programs. We produce videos, magazines, brochures and many other types of pro-

motional and informational pieces that promote our industry for our signatory contractors and LIUNA Tri-Fund affiliates," explained Media and Public Relations Director Faith Mansollilo-Orabona.

Students were intrigued by the high-end graphics department and high definition video suite used to produce in-house productions. Media Director Kevin Ferias explained some of what the job entails - from shooting video at large construction sites for training and promotional purposes; providing A/V services for meetings and conferences; to producing our very own NEL/CPS Graduation videos.

The department is currently assisting in the set-up of the new media studio at the Construction Career Academy so students can make televised announcements throughout the school. Students will also use the new facilities and equipment to shoot and edit their own documentaries which they will then include in their Senior Electronic Portfolio presentations.

## THE NEW ENGLAND LABORERS'/CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTION CAREER ACADEMY

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