



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Krieger, Communications - (401) 222-8471
Embargo until: Immediate release - Thursday, July 22, 2010

Rhode Island to Receive \$12.5 Million to Transform Lowest-Achieving Schools

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has announced that Rhode Island will receive \$12.5 million through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program to turn around its persistently lowest-achieving schools. These federal funds are part of the \$3.5 billion that will be made available to states this year from money set aside in the 2009 budget and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“When a school continues to perform in the bottom five percent of the state and isn’t showing signs of growth or has graduation rates below 60 percent, something dramatic needs to be done,” said Duncan. “Turning around our worst-performing schools is difficult for everyone, but it is critical that we show the courage to do the right thing by kids.”

“One of the priorities in our strategic plan is to accelerate all schools toward greatness, particularly schools that have been struggling for years to meet their annual targets,” said Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “These School Improvement Grants will help districts to transform their lowest-achieving schools, accelerate student achievement, and close achievement gaps. We believe this will help us to see aggressive gains in student achievement in every Rhode Island school.”

“Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools is a challenging process, but we have taken on this work with a sense of urgency. Rhode Island simply can no longer afford to have schools that are low achieving year after year,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “As low-achieving schools take on the work of transformation, we are committed to ensuring that districts and schools do this work correctly, with full community engagement and placing the best interest of students first.”

The \$12,509,424 made available to Rhode Island is being distributed by formula to the state. The R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) expects to award the funds to Central Falls and Providence, the two districts with schools that RIDE identified in January as having the persistently lowest-achieving in the state:

- Charlotte Woods Elementary School, Providence
- Central Falls Senior High School, Central Falls
- Feinstein High School, Providence (closed because of declining enrollment)
- Lillian Feinstein Elementary School at Sackett Street, Providence
- Roger Williams Middle School, Providence
- William B. Cooley, Sr., Health & Science Technology High School, Providence

-more-

Telephone 401-222-4600 **Fax** 401-222-6178 **TTY** 800-745-5555 **Voice** 800-745-6575

The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex,
sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, or disability

As required by the RIDE [protocol for interventions](#) in the persistently lowest-achieving schools, the Central Falls and Providence districts are in the process of developing plans to transform these schools. The districts will use the School Improvement Grants to help develop their transformation plans and to implement the plans over the next three years.

(Note: In order to receive the funds, the districts will submit an application to RIDE; RIDE will award the funds if the districts meet all criteria in the application.)

Following the protocol for interventions, during the 2010-11 school year RIDE will use the latest available assessment results and other data to identify another set of the persistently lowest-achieving schools. These schools will be subject to state intervention and will be required to select a model for transformation and to develop a transformation plan to go into effect in the fall of 2011.

The U.S. Department of Education expects to award a second round of School Improvement Grants during the 2010-11 school year, and these funds will be available to schools identified during 2010-11.

The RIDE application for the SIG funds is posted here:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/summary/index.html>.

###