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NEWS RELEASE

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Latest Test Results Show Statewide Improvements in Mathematics, Reading

PROVIDENCE – Test scores in mathematics and reading improved significantly statewide, according to the results of the 2006 state assessments, which Governor Donald L. Carcieri released today (Jan. 30th) at a State House news conference.

Mathematics scores improved by three percentage points and reading scores by four percentage points. In mathematics, 53 percent of the elementary- and middle-school students were proficient. In reading, 62 percent of the students were proficient. Writing scores, however, were down by five percentage points, with 46 percent of the students proficient.

Scores rose significantly in both mathematics and reading in 19 (of 36) districts, including Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence. Overall, scores in the core urban districts were up by 5 points in both mathematics and reading.

Significant improvements were made by several groups of students as well, including blacks, Hispanics, English-language learners, and students living in poverty. Smaller gains were achieved by students with disabilities.

“This is truly a turning point in education results for our state in reading and mathematics. I am especially gratified that we are seeing substantial improvements in our urban communities,” Governor Carcieri said. “These results show that our efforts to establish rigorous standards and create measures that enhance student learning are paying off. This is a tribute to the hard work of our educators, administrators, parents, and students.”

“I would like to congratulate all Rhode Island students and educators for making significant improvements across the board,” said Patrick A. Guida, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education and Chairman of the Regents Committee on Progressive Support & Intervention. “These improvements came about through hard work and through continued support from and direction from the state, as we have focused our efforts on the districts most in need. Today, we see the results: 5-point improvements in reading and mathematics in our core urban districts.”

“The improvement this year in test scores is the result of many years effort,” said Peter McWalters, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “We have adopted clearly articulated statewide standards in mathematics and reading, implemented a new testing system, increased professional development for educators, and developed the first statewide curriculum. In addition, our intervention partnerships with the core urban districts, targeted aid, and approved programming have produced significant gains this year.”

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The tests, administered last October, were developed and administered in partnership with New Hampshire and Vermont through the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), the first multistate testing partnership in the nation.

Reading and mathematics tests were administered to all students in grades 3 through 8; students in grades 5 and 8 were tested in writing. These test results will form the basis for school-performance classifications of elementary and middle schools. The classifications will be calculated over the next several weeks and will be released in the spring.

(High school students are tested in the spring; results of the most recent high-school tests were released last month.)

The NECAP tests are based on the state standards that were developed by teams of New England educators. Each question on the test is directly related to a specific element in the state standards – what students should know and be able to do – for each subject and grade level. These standards are posted on the RIDE Web site, www.ride.ri.gov, see under “State Standards.”

The tests and test reports were developed by Measured Progress, of New Hampshire.

Test results by school and district, plus a statewide summary and responses to Frequently Asked Questions about the state tests, are available today on the RIDE Web site.