



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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NEWS RELEASE

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Three High-School Teachers Receive First Passport to the Arts Awards

Teachers from Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School and Hope Arts School, in Providence, are the recipients of the first Passport to the Arts Awards.

In surprise visits today (November 26, 2008) to the two high schools, Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, presented the awards to Elizabeth Lind, an art teacher at Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School, and Steven Gardiner, the chair of the English Department at Exeter-West Greenwich, and to Christine Auxier, a theater-arts teacher at Hope Arts School.

The award, which is to be granted annually, honors educators whose participation in the Rhode Island Arts Learning Network Arts Passport Program sets a standard of excellence in service to secondary-school students. The winners of the award this year have incorporated community-based arts experiences within their coursework to help students demonstrate proficiency in the arts, which is a requirement for graduation from high school.

“With our tradition of excellence in music, the visual arts, and the performing arts, we in Rhode Island strongly believe that arts education must be part of the learning experience for every student,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “That’s why our new Rhode Island High School Diploma System ensures that all graduates must demonstrate proficiency in the arts. I am pleased today to honor teachers who have championed arts education in our high schools.”

Sherilyn Brown, administrator of the Rhode Island Arts Learning Network, said: “We believe that only by connecting the three worlds in which children learn—home, school, and community—will we truly be able to provide all students with the opportunities to learn and achieve at high levels.”

The Arts Passport Program is run by the Rhode Island Arts Learning Network, the mission of which is to ensure that all Rhode Island children and youth have equal access to the arts, both in and out of school. Arts Passport provides free access for member teachers and students to professional arts experiences that are school-linked and community-based.

For more information on the Arts Passport program, please contact Sherilyn Brown at the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts: 222-6994, or Sherry@arts.ri.gov. If you are a high-school arts educator, or partnering with a high-school arts educator to help meet the arts graduation requirement, you may also apply to Arts Passport on line at <http://www.riartslearning.net>.