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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Governor Carcieri Releases 2007-08 NECAP High-School Test Results

PROVIDENCE – Governor Donald L. Carcieri today (Feb. 27, 2008) released the results of the 2007-08 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests of high-school students in mathematics, reading, and writing.

The results showed that 61 percent of the high-school students (Grade 11) were proficient in reading, 37 percent were proficient in writing, and 22 percent were proficient in mathematics.

“This picture validates what we have suspected for some time: Too many of our students today do not have access to the rigorous instruction or the supports needed to meet high math standards,” said Governor Carcieri. “We have set statewide standards and expectations for our students. Now I want RIDE and Higher Ed to assemble a review team, or SWAT team, to look at the curriculum and teaching at the schools whose students were not performing to the standard so as to make sure that they have undertaken the work of aligning their math curriculum to these standards.”

In response to the low scores in mathematics, the Governor announced that he has asked the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) and the Office of Higher Education to bring a more intense focus on mathematics to their reform efforts. He called for the creation of a Math Implementation Committee that will focus on several topics:

- Personal Math Plans for all students who have fallen below grade level in mathematics
- Specialized professional development for mathematics teachers
- A review of the certification requirements for mathematics teachers and of the mathematics components of the teacher-training programs in the state

The Governor also has asked the Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Engineering (STEM) Program, based at Rhode Island College, to convene a “mathematics summit” at which mathematics teachers and department chairs will discuss mathematics education in the state.

The tests were administered in the three partner states (New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island) in October 2007; this marked the first time that the NECAP tests were administered at the high-school level. Results of the tests in Grades 3-8, which were released earlier this month, showed across-the-board improvements over three years in both reading and mathematics.

The high-school results in reading and writing were consistent with the results in Grades 3 through 8 and with previous high-school test results. The results in mathematics, however, were significantly below the NECAP scores in the lower grades, where proficiency levels by grade ranged from 60 percent to 48 percent.

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The Rhode Island results were comparable across the board to the New Hampshire scores:

	New Hampshire	Rhode Island
Mathematics	28% proficient	22% proficient
Reading	67% proficient	61% proficient
Writing	33% proficient	37% proficient

(Vermont scores will be released next month.)

“The mathematics results are troubling to all of us,” said Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “They tell me that something is significantly wrong about mathematics education – and it’s not just a Rhode Island problem. We expect our students to reach high standards in mathematics. Therefore, we must ensure that all of our students have access to the right math courses and to highly qualified math instructors.”

“These NECAP mathematics results are a call to action,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “We see good results in reading and writing, and we have seen steady improvement in the early grades. We must develop strategies to sustain this success in the higher grades.”

“Proficiency in Algebra 2 is considered one of the best indicators for success in college,” said Jack R. Warner, Commissioner of Higher Education. “Clearly, the mathematics scores are troubling in that regard. We have worked closely with the K-12 system to have higher education faculty involved in the discussion about high-school math standards in Rhode Island. We’re convinced these standards are rigorous and appropriate. They focus on problem-solving and working with mathematical concepts, two areas that have always been the most difficult for students to master. Therefore, it is not surprising to see poor results the first time through the NECAP test. We need to stick with the standards and intensify the work to better prepare our students to meet them.”

“Based upon what we find in this assessment, I will ask RIDE and the Office of Higher Education to develop specialized professional-development supports for our high-school math teachers that we can begin to offer this fall,” Governor Carcieri said. “Additionally, I want a Math Implementation Committee created to identify immediate and longer-term actions that will ensure our students access to high-quality mathematics curriculum and instruction.

“One thing we can’t do based on these results is lower our expectations,” the Governor continued. “I want this review to ensure that all students have access to rigorous math instruction - especially in middle schools and high schools. And, we need to develop ‘Personal Math Plans’ to get remedial support to the students who need it. We have had success with our ‘Personal Literacy Plan’ model; now let’s focus on math.

“For long-run success, we need to review our teacher-certification and training programs and the existing continued professional-development options for our math instructors. I would like the Math Implementation Committee also to consider as one potential option high-stakes testing for our teachers, as was done in Massachusetts. There is no reason why we can’t have the best-prepared math teachers here in Rhode Island.”

Complete NECAP results, including results by school and by district, are posted on the RIDE Web site, [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov), under “NECAP Test Results.”