



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Krieger, Communications - (401) 222-8471
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Rhode Island named one 19 finalists for Race to the Top Round 2

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today (July 27) that Rhode Island is one of 19 finalists for Race to the Top Round 2 funding, which could bring \$75 million to the state to improve public schools and to support educators and students.

“We are pleased and honored to be named as a finalist for the very competitive Race for the Top Round 2 grants,” said Governor Donald L. Carcieri. “We have made a commitment as a state to improve our education system. We continue to make great strides toward our goal. The \$75 million in Race to the Top funds will advance our achievements and help us continue to improve the educational experience for our youth and improve the quality of our teachers. I commend Commissioner Gist, the Board of Regents, the Department of Education staff, local school districts and the labor unions that supported the state’s application. The broad support our application received is one example of our steadfast commitment to improve our education for all our students.”

If awarded the grant, Rhode Island will use Race to the Top funds to develop:

- world-class standards and assessments;
- user-friendly data systems to improve instruction;
- mentoring and training for all teachers and school leaders;
- educator evaluation systems to improve teacher effectiveness; and
- systems of support for the lowest-achieving schools.

“We are honored and excited that the U.S. Department of Education has selected Rhode Island as a finalist for Race to the Top Round 2,” said Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “With input and support from a broad range of educators, parents, students, community organizations, business and labor leaders, and elected officials, we are confident that we have submitted one of the strongest applications in the country. Race to the Top funds can help us move ahead aggressively with our strategic plan to transform education in Rhode Island, and we look forward to meeting with the review team next month in Washington to make a winning case for our application.”

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“I am very pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has recognized not only our outstanding Race to the Top proposal but also the bold actions we have taken already to improve student performance and to close achievement gaps,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “Race to the Top funds can help us develop and provide supports for students, training for teachers, high-quality assessments to measure achievement and performance, and innovative schools and programs to prepare our graduates for success in college and careers. With support from Race to the Top, we will move faster toward our goal of making Rhode Island the home of America’s best public schools!”

A total of 48 of the 50 school districts, state-operated schools, and charter schools, plus 11 local teachers’ unions, signed on in support of the proposal to transform education in Rhode Island, and more than 100 community members, education leaders, and elected officials wrote letters of support to accompany the application.

The [application](#), which Commissioner Gist submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on May 27, contains a detailed plan on how Rhode Island would use Race to the Top funds to provide:

- training for educators regarding new world-class standards;
- training in the use of data to improve instruction;
- support for a new system that will track education data over multiple years;
- information for teachers and families on student growth and achievement at the classroom, school, and district levels;
- data and other support for an educator-evaluation system that we will design in partnership with educators;
- support toward developing new models of teacher compensation;
- stronger induction programs for new teachers and school leaders;
- training in the management of human resources;
- development of a deeper applicant pool for subjects that are hard to staff;
- increased supports for principals and teacher leaders; and
- partnerships with professional organizations that have proven records of success.

Rhode Island will send a team of five (Governor Carcieri; Commissioner Gist; Deputy Commissioner David V. Abbott; Sharon Contreras, Chief Academic Officer at the Providence Public Schools; and Mary Ann Snider, the RIDE chief of Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness) to the U.S. Department of Education during the week of August 9 for an interview on the Rhode Island application.

All school districts but Chariho Regional and Little Compton, plus all 4 state-operated schools and all 10 independent charter public schools signed the Memorandum of Understanding as participants in the grant application. The local teachers’ unions that signed on in support are, from the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, Central Falls, Cranston, Coventry, Johnston, Lincoln, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket, and, from National Education Association Rhode Island, Foster and Gloucester.

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If Rhode Island receives Race to the Top funds (\$75 million over four years), the state and the participating districts will use the funds exclusively to support the initiatives in the statewide plan that the Race to the Top application describes. Race to the Top will impose no additional costs on the participating school districts.

Rhode Island was one of 16 finalists for Race to the Top Round 1, which the U.S. Department of Education awarded to only two states. The U.S. Department of Education will announce the winners of the Race to the Top Round 2 grants in September.

For further information about the Rhode Island application, see the [Race to the Top](#) page on the RIDE Web site: www.ride.ri.gov.

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Governor Carcieri will be available for interviews after 2:30 p.m. at the State House. Contact Amy Kempe @ 222-8290.

Commissioner Gist will be available for interviews after 2:30 p.m. at RIDE, 80 Washington St./255 Westminster St., Providence. Contact Elliot Krieger @ 222-8471.