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NEWS RELEASE

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Commissioner Gist Approves Unique Management-Labor Compact Four Providence Schools to Operate Under First-of-its-Kind School-Reform Model

Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist has approved the proposal from Schools Superintendent Thomas M. Brady to close and restart four Providence schools under a joint management-labor compact.

“I am deeply committed to the idea that teachers should be part of the decision-making process as we transform education,” Gist said. “I’m very enthusiastic about the commitment of the Providence Teachers Union to this school-reform effort.”

The joint management-labor compact is one of the examples of a restart model in the Rhode Island [protocol for interventions](#) in the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state. It is believed that Rhode Island is the only state to include a management-labor compact, “detailing reciprocal obligations that create a new management structure with shared decision-making designed to fully address the needs of each student in the schools,” as one of the examples for reform of the lowest-achieving schools.

The Providence School Department “made it clear that this model allows for the greatest fiscal sustainability, as well as an unprecedented opportunity to work in collaboration with its teachers’ union,” Gist wrote to Brady in a letter sent today (April 1, 2010). “Most importantly, this innovative model will afford you the flexibility to select appropriate interventions that will accelerate student achievement in each of the schools.”

Beginning in the fall of this year (2010), four Providence schools will operate under a joint management-labor compact: Charlotte Woods Elementary, Lillian Feinstein at Sackett a Street, Roger Williams Middle School, and Cooley Health and Science Technical Academy High School. (The Providence School Department will close a fifth school that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [RIDE] identified as one of the persistently lowest achieving, Feinstein High School, as part of the district facilities plan, *not* as a reform strategy.)

Brady and his team of stakeholders, including the Providence Teachers Union, have 120 business days to draft a detailed school-reform plan for each school. Gist, who must approve the final plans, told Brady that each plan “must be based on a comprehensive needs-assessment that takes the following into account: curriculum; instruction; assessment; accountability and evaluation; leadership and governance; professional development; culture and climate; external support and resources; parent and community involvement; and extended learning activities.”

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In addition, the district must include in its plans details about the operation of the management-labor compact. The district must also clarify in its plans “the responsibilities of district administration, and clearly [define] the nature of the collaborative effort to design and implement the new school structure,” Gist noted.

In January, RIDE identified the five Providence schools and Central Falls High School as the lowest achieving in the state. Under federal guidelines and the RIDE protocol for interventions, each school district had 30 business days to select one of four models (transformation, school closure, restart, or turnaround) to reform each school.

“I commend you and the Providence School Board for engaging in an extensive community-engagement effort throughout your process of selecting a model,” Gist wrote to Brady. “I believe that you have demonstrated the leadership needed to work collaboratively with labor on the design of new school structures and programs. Together with the Providence Teachers Union, you have selected a model that is in the best interest of accelerating student achievement in Providence. The RIDE team and I are prepared to support you and the Providence community as you work together to create great schools that prepare all students for success in college, careers, and life.”

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