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NEWS RELEASE

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2012 Classifications: 16 Schools Newly Identified for Intervention Education Commissioner Gist Names 26 Commended Schools

Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist today (July 13, 2012) released the 2012 School Classifications, the first set of classifications under the new Rhode Island Accountability System, which is designed to recognize outstanding performance and to provide support to low-achieving schools.

The new accountability system enables the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) to:

- focus on achievement gaps;
- diagnose school performance by identifying specific shortcomings and achievements at each school;
- provide each school with the specific support or intervention needed to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps; and
- provide these schools with the ability to select interventions that respond to their context and their needs.

“The new accountability system will enable us to give our schools the support they need to overcome challenges and to improve student achievement,” said Governor Lincoln D. Chafee. “This is an important step forward as we work to provide a world-class education for all Rhode Island students.”

“We were pleased when the U.S. Department of Education approved our new accountability system, which Commissioner Gist and her team developed over six months with extensive input from the education field,” said George D. Caruolo, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “With the release today of the 2012 School Classifications, we have begun to put our accountability system into action. Our goal is to improve student achievement across Rhode Island.”

The U.S. Department of Education approved the Rhode Island Accountability System on May 29.

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“With our new system of accountability, support, and intervention, we are using multiple criteria to measure school performance, and we will work with low-achieving schools to focus on their specific problems and to develop and implement plans for school improvement,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “We look forward to using our new accountability system as we work together with students, teachers, and school leaders to accelerate all Rhode Island schools toward greatness.”

RIDE based the 2012 school classifications on:

- **Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?
- **Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?
- **Participation:** How many students take the state assessments?
- **Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners?
- **Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?
- **Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?
- **Improvement (high schools):** Is the school improving annually?
- **Graduation (high schools):** Is the school reaching its graduation-rate goals?

Using these measures, RIDE placed each school into one of six classifications: Commended, Leading, Typical, Warning, Focus, or Priority.

Today’s classifications identify 26 schools (9 percent of classified schools) as Commended Schools. Commended Schools, the highest-achieving schools in the state, are recognized because of either high performance or significant progress. Four of the commended schools are in the Chariho Regional District; two each are in Barrington, Cranston, East Greenwich, and Scituate; one each is in Bristol Warren, Cumberland, New Shoreham, North Kingstown, North Providence, Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown, and Tiverton; and five are charter public schools.

The 2012 Classifications also identify 11 schools as Focus Schools (4 percent of classified schools) and 18 schools as Priority Schools (6 percent of classified schools). Focus and Priority Schools are the lowest-achieving schools in the state and are subject to state intervention.

The Priority Schools include the 13 schools that RIDE identified in 2010 and 2011 for intervention; these schools are in Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence, plus the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

Newly identified for intervention are 5 Priority Schools: the Agnes B. Hennessey School (East Providence), the Dr. M.H. Sullivan School (Newport), and three additional schools in Providence (Governor Christopher Del Sesto Middle School, Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School, and the Robert L. Bailey IV Elementary School).

The 11 Focus Schools, all newly identified for intervention, include the Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School (Central Falls), the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy (Cranston), and 9 Providence schools.

“We have an urgent obligation and a unique opportunity before us to transform our struggling schools,” said Providence School Superintendent Dr. Susan Lusi. “Today’s report clearly indicates that we have much serious work to do in our district. We will immediately begin the process of putting our teams together to plan the process of school transformation. We expect that the changes we make in our struggling schools will drive extensive schoolwide reform throughout our district.

“These transformations can serve as examples of how collaborative efforts can bring remarkable changes and success for our schools’ students. But we must act quickly. We look forward to working with all of our stakeholders – administrators, labor unions, teachers, parents, students, and community partners – to raise the bar for student achievement.”

Over the next two months, the schools newly identified for intervention will go through a diagnostic screening process to determine specific shortcomings and needs. By November, subject to Commissioner Gist’s approval, superintendents will select an intervention model for each newly identified Focus and Priority school. By January 2013, districts will develop school-reform plans, which will include numerous reform strategies in the areas of leadership, support, infrastructure, and content. The plans will address the specific needs of each identified school. Plans for Priority Schools will cover a span of 3-5 years; plans for Focus Schools will cover a span of 2-3 years. RIDE will closely monitor the implementation of these plans. The 41 Warning Schools that RIDE identified today will also develop and implement plans for improvement, but on a lesser scale and without intensive RIDE oversight.

A complete list of the 2012 School Classifications and links to the 2012 Rhode Island School Report Cards are available here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/DataWorks/>

For a Fact Sheet on the Rhode Island Accountability System, see:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/accountability_system_-_fact_sheet_-_6-1-12.pdf

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