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**Providence Schools**

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## **PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAIL REFORM OPPORTUNITIES**

**PROVIDENCE, R.I. (Monday, January 11, 2010)** – Providence Schools Superintendent Thomas M. Brady announced today that the district is “ready to take on the work of school reform set before us, and is confident in our state’s chances to secure the financial support for this work through Federal funding.” With the identification by the Rhode Island Department of Education of schools designated as “persistently lowest-achieving,” Providence will be required to develop strategic plans to implement major reforms in five of its forty-five schools.

“The groundwork is laid for accelerated reform. Providence has been steadily gaining momentum as a district by making some truly impactful changes,” said Brady. “The push by federal and state authorities to aggressively implement change at our lowest-performing schools is necessary in order to marshal the collective will and the resources to build on our foundational work and bring about change that will dramatically improve the quality of education that our students receive.”

Recent reform work in Providence includes the adoption of an Aligned Instruction System, which encompasses a guaranteed and viable curriculum, high-quality professional development for teachers, and a comprehensive assessment framework. The district’s math and science curricula have been implemented across all grade levels, with English Language Arts and social studies under development; more rigorous graduation standards have been adopted for high schools district-wide; and the district has implemented new, student needs-driven hiring and assignment processes for teachers.

To support these vigorous reform efforts, the state is applying for federal Race to the Top funding, which has the potential to bring millions of dollars into the state. The Providence School Board and Mayor David N. Cicilline are fully committed in their full support of the state’s application, with the Board voting at its December 14 meeting to sign an initial memorandum of understanding with RIDE, agreeing to participate wholly in the process.

Said Mayor Cicilline: “Every child in every one of our schools deserves the highest-quality education and the process on which we’re about to embark will allow us to accelerate that effort.”

“We recognize the urgency to improve schools and are committed to this mission,” said Providence School Board member Philip Gould. “Our students deserve the best education we can possibly provide them. Anything less is unacceptable. Their future depends on it.”

The identification of low-performing schools is not new to Rhode Island; the No Child Left Behind Act has mandated since 2002 that the state develop and implement an accountability system. However, the U.S. Department of Education has recently expressed increased urgency to reform chronically low-performing schools, precipitating RIDE’s aggressive strategy to reform education in Rhode Island.