

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RACE TO THE TOP

GRANT REVIEW

Phase 1 Tier 2 State Presentation

The State of Rhode Island

1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Holiday Inn Capitol Hill
550 C Street. S.W.
Washington, D.C.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 GOVERNOR CARCIERI: Well, thank you very much.
3 We are very honored to be here today, and thank you for
4 recognizing the strong education foundation that Rhode
5 Island has built and acknowledging our bold plan, our firm
6 commitment and leadership to dramatically accelerate our
7 student achievement.

8 As governor, I can tell you we are prepared and
9 committed to execute the actions that we have laid out in
10 our Race to the Top application.

11 First, let me introduce our team, the leaders
12 who were responsible, in my judgment, for implementing our
13 Race to the Top plan.

14 To my right is Commissioner Deb Gist, who is the
15 Commissioner of Elementary Education.

16 To my left is Tom Brady, Superintendent of the
17 Providence Public Schools.

18 To his left is Dave Abbott, who is Deputy
19 Commissioner.

20 To the far right is Mary Ann Snider, who is
21 Chief of Educator Excellence and Instructional
22 Effectiveness.

23 We know that having a good plan is not enough.

1 We understand the necessary political will and community
2 support to make it happen. Our ambitious agenda has been
3 developed, you should know with deep and broad input from
4 stakeholders all across the State.

5 As noted in our application, over 500 Rhode
6 Island citizens participated in some 5 community forums,
7 sharing their views and dreams for a better system of
8 education in Rhode Island, and that conversation has not
9 stopped.

10 We developed a Race to the Top application that
11 has unprecedented -- I have been in this job eight years
12 almost -- unprecedented in statewide support. In fact,
13 while the five of us are here representing Rhode Island,
14 we are actually not alone today.

15 We have a delegation of dedicated State leaders
16 that traveled here to D.C. from Rhode Island. They
17 include the Speaker of the House of Representatives Gordon
18 Fox; the President of our Senate, Teresa Paiva-Weed; Mayor
19 Cicilline of Providence, our capital city; Mayor McKee of
20 Cumberland, who is leading a consortium of mayors working
21 together on education reform; the President of the
22 Providence Teachers' Union, part of the AFT, Steve Smith;
23 the President of our Charter School Association, Dr. Julie

1 Nora; the Superintendent of Foster, and the local NEA
2 union leadership; the Executive Director of the Rhode
3 Island Foundation, Neil Steinberg, and several
4 representatives of the Board of Regents.

5 These leaders are meeting right now with our
6 congressional delegation to discuss our State's ambitious
7 education reform agenda. They and their fellow Rhode
8 Islanders know that implementing this agenda is critically
9 important to our State.

10 Since becoming governor in 2003, you should know
11 that my top priority has been education. Not only is it
12 important for the future of the student, but it is vital
13 to the economic health of our State.

14 Also you should know that for me, this is a very
15 personal and passionate commitment. My dad was a high
16 school teacher/coach for 38 years. I taught high school
17 mathematics for 2 years. My wife was a junior high
18 science teacher. So, I know firsthand that effective
19 teachers are critical to student achievement.

20 To be quite frank with you, early in my first
21 term, it was clear to me that our public schools were
22 failing too many of our children, especially in our urban
23 districts.

1 Since then, we have made a relentless effort to
2 implement high standards in a robust assessment system, as
3 you are aware, in conjunction with three other New England
4 States, something that is unique in the country right now.

5 Further, we committed that no child in Rhode
6 Island would receive a diploma that did not signify
7 demonstrated proficiency. As a result, our board of
8 regents adopted graduation and diploma criteria that are
9 rigorous and broad based.

10 I am taking the time to give you this
11 perspective, because we have been working tirelessly on
12 this agenda for seven years and with measurable results,
13 but it is time to sort of step up our game.

14 I now can say with certainty that we have the
15 momentum, we have the commitment to drive this reform, as
16 I say, from the State House to the classroom. I have
17 restructured my entire management team in education. I
18 have changed the leadership in higher education. They are
19 prepared to accelerate this agenda for improving education
20 pre-K right through 16.

21 I have appointed new members to the board of
22 regents, a new chairman, all of whom are reform oriented
23 and have created a bold vision in the policy and

1 regulatory conditions for transforming education in our
2 state.

3 One of the Board's key accomplishments was to
4 select a leader, Commissioner Deborah Gist, who has the
5 same relentless focus on dramatically accelerating student
6 achievement, so I am grateful to have Commissioner Gist
7 lead our state's efforts.

8 We have begun this race with our strategic plan
9 under the board of regents and the Commissioner's
10 leadership, and we are not going to stop. We are not
11 going to stop. We have now alignment, we have broad
12 public buy-in in this, and we have the leadership, in my
13 judgment, to make it happen.

14 Obviously, it will happen more rapidly, more
15 deeply, and broadly with Race to the Top. I know that we
16 have set some very ambitious goals, but to me, that is
17 entirely appropriate. We know what has to be done and
18 have put our feet to the fire to do it, and just as our
19 children in our classrooms know how to respond to high
20 expectations, so will our team.

21 So, it is with great confidence really that I
22 ask Deborah Gist and the rest of the panel to show you
23 exactly how our bold actions will happen in Rhode Island.

1 MS. GIST: Thank you, Governor, and thank you
2 for your leadership.

3 What we want to accomplish here with you this
4 afternoon is to share with you how ready we are to
5 implement these bold reforms. We want you to know as
6 deeply as we do the foundation and the conditions that we
7 have in place in our State, and we actually hope that by
8 the end of our session, your enthusiasm will so match ours
9 that you will actually want to come to Rhode Island with
10 us and help us carry out these reforms.

11 Our theory of action has driven our strategic
12 agenda and has served as a foundation for our Race to the
13 Top application, and they are all completely interrelated.
14 We want you to know that every aspect of our application
15 from professional development to the resources and tools
16 that we are going to provide to our educators, to how we
17 have organized and prioritized our budget are all based on
18 what we can do to best support and drive this theory of
19 action.

20 You can see that the gold star is at the top,
21 and this is what we are always focused on, is ensuring
22 that every student leaves our high schools ready for
23 success in college, careers, and life.

1 We know that we are going to be able to do that
2 when we have an effective teacher in every classroom and
3 an effective leader in every school. We know that our
4 teachers and our great leaders will be most successful
5 when they are supported by systems that are student
6 centered.

7 We consider our strategic agenda to be a promise
8 to the students of Rhode Island, and Race to the Top will
9 dramatically accelerate our ability to raise student
10 achievement and close our existing gaps in performance.

11 What we want to emphasize to you today is that
12 Rhode Island is ready to dramatically accelerate student
13 achievement, we are ready to do this. We have the
14 strength of regulation and policy, and we have the courage
15 to use it for our students.

16 Now, it may sound kind of dry and bureaucratic
17 to say that we have the strength of regulation and policy,
18 and so what I want to emphasize is that this is one of the
19 most important things I would want you to take away from
20 this meeting this afternoon, that in Rhode Island, our
21 board of regents, a reform-minded body with a real sense
22 of purpose, as the Governor described, had the ability to
23 create law.

1 Our board of regents for elementary and
2 secondary education have the ability in our State to
3 create law, and as Commissioner, I have the authority to
4 uphold that law.

5 For example or for one instance, our basic
6 education program, something that we talked about in our
7 application, is far from basic. This actually sets the
8 minimum expectations for what kind of education, the
9 quality of education that every student in Rhode Island
10 should receive.

11 As an example, it is the document that we were
12 able to use when we said that seniority will no longer be
13 able to be the basis for how teachers and other educators
14 are placed in our state.

15 We also have the proven capacity to execute. we
16 have the proven capacity to execute our plan, and our
17 State has worked with our charter schools, our districts,
18 and our teachers on many different things including
19 developing curriculum and putting our NECAP standards into
20 place, and developing proficiency-based assessments for
21 our high school graduation assessments.

22 We have created a community of practice where we
23 incubate, innovate, and learn together, and put our

1 lessons into practice, we grow what works, and we do this
2 together. So, we worked across our state with our
3 professionals.

4 We have also worked across State lines. In
5 fact, I think we are the only state that is a part of
6 three successful state consortia. We are leaders in the
7 NECAP, we are also part of the successful LEDA consortium
8 for English language learners, and we are part of the
9 ACHIEVE algebra consortium.

10 Rhode Island is ready to lead our state and we
11 are ready to lead the country. We also have clarity of
12 purpose, and this clarity of purpose fuels our commitment.
13 Our clarity begins with actually a deep understanding of
14 where we are by looking at our student achievement data.

15 While we have evidence that we have seen some
16 incremental growth in reading and math, we have compelling
17 evidence that we have far too many of our students who are
18 not achieving the skills that they need to be successful
19 in postsecondary education.

20 We have an alarming number of students leaving
21 our schools before graduation. Furthermore, we are deeply
22 concerned about our achievement gaps. Our strategic
23 agenda tackles these head-on, and we have a specific plan

1 for how, in the next years, we will dramatically increase
2 achievement and cut our achievement gaps in half.

3 Our purpose is clear, and it fuels our
4 commitment and our sense of urgency. So, in other words,
5 I want you to know that we have the authority and the
6 experience and the commitment to carry out this agenda.

7 Because we are ready to act, we have a
8 foundation for reform, and it is already there, it's in
9 place. We are confident and we were confident to be able
10 to set some bold goals that you saw in our application,
11 and these goals are achievable with our plan.

12 I want to highlight just three of those for you
13 this afternoon. The first is increasing our graduation
14 rate to 87 percent. As the Governor said, our graduation
15 is meaningful, but right now we lose thousands of students
16 each year. We have in place high school reforms now to
17 ensure personalization, and it requires that every student
18 in our state has an individual graduation plan.

19 We know what we need to do in order to reach
20 this goal, and we are going to cut our achievement gaps in
21 half, and while this is ambitious, as well, it could not
22 be more important. Our achievement gaps are unacceptable
23 and every element in our plan is designed in order to make

1 this happen.

2 Third, we will ensure that no child will have
3 two ineffective teachers in a row.

4 Let's think about this one actually, and this
5 seems reasonable, right, no student will have an
6 ineffective teacher two years in a row, and I am sure you
7 would ask yourself, as I do, how could that not be the
8 norm, why would we ever expect that a student would have
9 one ineffective teacher in a row, let alone two, but
10 sadly, despite what we know about the research, as far as
11 I know, we are the only state that has the willingness and
12 the ability to make this commitment to its students, and
13 we have made that promise, and we expect that every
14 student and every parent in our state will hold us to that
15 promise, and we will deliver on it.

16 We know that our students with the greatest
17 needs do not always have the quality of educators they
18 need to accelerate their learning, so we really consider
19 this to be a priority. It is not just a goal, and we have
20 designed the evaluation, the data systems, and the
21 processes that we need in order to make this happen.

22 Of course, this is just a first step toward
23 making sure that our students have an effective teacher in

1 their classroom every year, but it is a critical promise
2 that no other state is making.

3 Great teachers and leaders affect every one of
4 our goals including the three that I shared. What I want
5 you to know about our proposal, about our Race to the Top
6 proposal is that it is not a handful of pilots, it is not
7 a sprinkling of best practices across our state.

8 Our Race to the Top plan is a deep and
9 comprehensive program that will fundamentally change the
10 level of expectation, the accountability, and the
11 performance and practice in every single school in our
12 state, and we can do that, and we can do that because of
13 our size and because of our density.

14 As I found out when I got to the state, I could
15 get to any district within an hour, which is incredibly
16 helpful. We have invested heavily in professional
17 development for our principals and for our teacher leaders
18 in our application, and we are going to position them as
19 agents of reform within their schools, so that they can
20 embed professional development in their schools every day.

21 In fact, over half of our Race to the Top budget
22 at the state level goes to professional development for
23 educators in our districts. In addition, we have

1 intensive support that we are going to be providing to our
2 11 highest need districts, which reaches 76 percent of our
3 most disadvantaged students.

4 Now, most aspects of this continuum are going to
5 look incredibly familiar to you, but I want to show you
6 how, in every way, in Rhode Island we are redesigning
7 these systems to focus on excellence.

8 So, when we start with preparation, we are going
9 to strengthen our educator pipeline. Already we have
10 raised the standards for acceptance into our preparation
11 program. These will now be the highest in the country.

12 We have also welcomed preparation programs to
13 Rhode Island including the new teacher project and Teach
14 for America. We will have high expectations for all of
15 our preparation programs including our higher education
16 preparation program, and we will have high expectations
17 for the teachers and school leaders that they produce.

18 We are going to invest in and improve the
19 quality, and we will only be approving preparation
20 programs in our state that we can demonstrate with results
21 and student achievement that they are successful.

22 With certification, unlike any state in the
23 country, Rhode Island will be basing our decisions about

1 certification and recertification on the effectiveness of
2 our educators. No new teacher in the State of Rhode
3 Island will receive certification until he has proven
4 effectiveness, and no recertification will be issued
5 without that same assurance.

6 Recruitment and selection will be based on
7 students needs, and unlike most of them, our districts are
8 now expected to have practices in place in which they
9 assign educators based on what students need, and not
10 based on seniority.

11 Induction. We know that our new professionals
12 need support, and we are going to provide them with that
13 through the support of proven mentor teachers, and only
14 the highest quality teachers who come into our systems
15 will remain in our profession and receive tenure and
16 certification.

17 We know that we need to support and develop our
18 great professional educators. We are going to provide
19 them with the tools and the resources they need to be at
20 their best. Because of Race to the Top, our educators
21 will engage in a study of the standards and the
22 implementation of formative and interim assessments, in
23 the use of our instructional management system.

1 Each of them will have, because of our
2 evaluation system, an individualized professional
3 development plan based on their own evaluation. As you
4 can see, every aspect of this continuum rests in many ways
5 with the evaluation, which we want to make sure is fair
6 and provides actual feedback to our educators.

7 Our effectiveness measures will be real and will
8 be based primarily on student growth and achievement.
9 With our career ladder, only those educators who prove
10 effectiveness will be promoted into school leadership
11 positions and mentor teacher positions.

12 Now, even with this intensive focus on quality
13 and preparation, there are going to be times when we need
14 to move to change the educators in our system, and I want
15 you to know, that we are going to do that decisively.

16 No educator will be retained by a district if
17 they have more than two ineffective evaluations, and as I
18 said, a certification will be also based on effectiveness.

19 We have shown you our theory of action, and we
20 have demonstrated to you, I hope, our courage, our
21 capacity, and our commitment to accelerate our work. So,
22 I want to briefly touch on how our theory will get put
23 into practice.

1 Our entire focus, as I said, is on the star.
2 Our student success will happen in the classroom. We
3 understand how far removed the state is from the
4 classroom, and so we will be working very closely with our
5 district.

6 Every level needs to be supported by the other,
7 the classroom by the school, and the school by the
8 district, and the district by the state.

9 I would like to turn it over to my colleague,
10 Tom Brady, to illustrate the important role of the
11 district in implementing our agenda and how we have worked
12 successfully together.

13 MR. BRADY: Thank you, Commissioner. I am
14 honored to represent Providence School District. We have
15 24,000 students. It represents 20 percent of all the
16 students in Rhode Island and 35 percent of all the
17 students in poverty in Rhode Island, but I don't just
18 represent myself.

19 I also represent every other superintendent and
20 school board within the state who willfully signed on to
21 the Race to the Top application, are committed to the
22 reform efforts that we are outlining today for you.

23 What I would like to do is from a district

1 level, talk about two reforms that are already in action,
2 and then talk about how Race to the Top will accelerate
3 our plans.

4 The first is that 24 months ago, we began the
5 work of an aligned curriculum to state standards. Core
6 curriculum is absolutely critical from K to 12. We began
7 the work, partnering with the Dana Center as a national
8 benchmark, and invested \$22 million from the American
9 Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and did it with fidelity.

10 We not only aligned the standards, but we also
11 have the professional development for the teachers, so
12 that they were properly prepared to execute the core
13 curriculum and the instructional material for the students
14 to make sure it was with fidelity, as I said.

15 So, we are in the process, we have fielded the
16 mathematics and science in September, we are developing
17 social studies and English language arts, and then the
18 rest is a three-year process, and it has been so
19 successful, the partnership with the Dana Center and our
20 teachers to formulate it, the State will use it as a model
21 as they look upon the rest of Rhode Island.

22 The next very significant reform effort that we
23 have already put into effect, you have heard the Governor

1 and the Commissioner talk about the reform model that is
2 already in place, well, allow me to explain that.

3 We have taken criterion-based hiring, our term,
4 which is an objective evaluation and the interview process
5 for new teachers, and we have used that, the Commissioner
6 has executed an order, has given us an order to do that.

7 Last year we began that effort. We centered on
8 six schools as a pilot. We had 78 positions open, we had
9 580 applicants. In that process, we hired 78 positions,
10 78 teachers who met the objective qualifications, and it
11 was not based on seniority.

12 That is revolutionary in Rhode Island, and again
13 allow me to frame it, so I can explain exactly how
14 revolutionary.

15 The year before we laid off 500 teachers,
16 rehired 480 teachers. Those teachers were assigned to
17 positions based only on seniority, so this turbulence
18 within the system is unimaginable. That has stopped, and
19 now this year, for the entire district, it will be
20 criterion-based hiring.

21 So we have the capacity to execute the reform,
22 and those are two good examples. We also have the
23 mayoral-controlled school board for Providence, and an

1 appointed school board, and it is the conditions for
2 reform that we need.

3 We do not do it alone, we have a great
4 partnership with our Providence Teachers' Union. With
5 Race to the Top, we will be able to accelerate a number of
6 reforms. We have identified with the state partnering,
7 the five lowest performing schools. We have had 28
8 different engagements with teachers, parents,
9 stakeholders, and we have decided to use the Restart
10 model.

11 The State has imposed additional requirements
12 above the federal model, but nevertheless, we are doing
13 the Restart, and we will have a management-labor compact,
14 and so we are very, very anxious to execute that in our
15 partnership with the Providence Teachers' Union, because
16 we believe it will be a model for the State and a model
17 for the Nation, as we go forward, and it will have all the
18 elements of the Restart that you are very, very familiar
19 with.

20 We also are working on an evaluation system.
21 The AFT gave us a national grant, and four urban districts
22 within Rhode Island are working together on the
23 formulation of an evaluation tool that will be following

1 the State's requirements, so again partnership there.

2 We are modeling professional development. We
3 changed department heads and department chairs in our
4 middle schools and our high schools. We have reinvented
5 the position or retitled the position, but gave it
6 different requirements, and they are called teacher
7 leaders.

8 Now, the teacher leaders in the middle school
9 and the high school have been trained through professional
10 development to drive the core curriculum into the
11 classroom with their teachers.

12 I think that is very critical and with Race to
13 the Top, we can even accelerate that professional
14 development.

15 We are poised to continue this reform effort,
16 and please don't misinterpret. We are going to continue
17 the effort. We are convinced Race to the Top will be able
18 to accelerate it, but from a superintendent point of view,
19 and the largest school district in the state, we are going
20 to continue this work. We hope to have it accelerated.

21 So, Providence is ready. I will turn it back to
22 the Commissioner to tell you how the State is ready.

23 MS. GIST: Thank you, Tom.

1 We know that there are many strong states in
2 this process, in fact, we have learned a lot from our
3 colleagues in other states, and we know this is an
4 incredibly competitive process.

5 I am sure that at some point you are asking
6 yourself why Rhode Island, and what I want you to know is
7 that is the exact question I was asking myself about a
8 year ago.

9 Now that I have been in Rhode Island for about
10 eight months, what I can tell you is that I am more
11 confident than ever, and it is more clear to me than ever
12 before how ready the State is.

13 I know that we can and we will carry out these
14 reforms in this agenda. We have bold and achievable
15 goals. These are foundations to build upon. We have
16 courage at every level in our state to act on the best
17 interests of our students.

18 We know we will be successful, and I think that
19 matters, and, of course, we all know that it matters for
20 our students in the State of Rhode Island, but I think it
21 also matters for our country, because Rhode Island will
22 show at scale what a state system can do and what is
23 possible for students across our nation.

1 Because of our manageable size and our
2 demographics which mirror those of the country, our state
3 can prove the effectiveness of these innovative and
4 replicable solutions.

5 We have the momentum and we have the urgency, we
6 have the courage, the capacity, and the commitment, and
7 Race to the Top will enable us to dramatically improve
8 student achievement in our state.

9 REVIEWER 1: I am going to try to moderate with
10 my colleagues. First, I would like to tell you we very
11 much appreciate your considerable efforts in [inaudible].

12 We have tried to honor your efforts by doing due
13 diligence ourselves, and we have looked through that
14 proposal more than once, which involved a great amount of
15 time.

16 But one of the things that is important that we
17 are trying to make our final evaluation, there are some
18 questions that we would like further information on, and
19 the information that we would like for those questions is
20 very critical as you are getting down to your final score.

21 There are 13 questions, and those 13 questions
22 are somewhat prioritized, but I think it's in everybody's
23 best interests if we get through them all. In order to do

1 that we are going to go about four minutes per question.

2 Now maybe some will take a little bit longer,
3 and we have a little flex, but what I am going to do is at
4 the mid-point, which is going to be about 32 minutes,
5 [inaudible], and we would like for you to balance your
6 answers.

7 I don't anticipate whether we will direct any
8 questions to any individual, you all decide that, but we
9 would like to start first with Reviewer 2.

10 REVIEWER 2: Yes, thank you very much. We have
11 not only read, but heard you talk about your theory of
12 action, the first part of which is effective teachers and
13 leaders.

14 We have also heard you talk about the support
15 throughout the plan, we have read it. We have heard you
16 talk about the kind of support that you want to give to
17 your staff, particularly through professional development,
18 as well as other support that you plan.

19 On your continuum, however, I want to drill down
20 into that part where you talk about the development of
21 staff. So, I want you to talk with us more about your
22 intent to build the capacity of the SEA district and
23 school staff to implement your Race to the Top reform

1 plan.

2 In the Rhode Island application, you propose to
3 use external providers to implement planned initiatives
4 and conduct staff training, and I have two questions that
5 I would like you to talk with us about.

6 The first is over the time frame of the grant,
7 how do you propose to build the capacities of staff to
8 implement scale-up and sustain your reform plan, and,
9 second, how do you intend to use the Dana Center -- we
10 have heard about the Dana Center -- to support the
11 adoption and implementation of these standards, and how
12 will you develop your own capacity to do this work in a
13 sustained way?

14 MS. SNIDER: I am so glad you asked this
15 question, because I think in our planning and design for
16 this application, we gave extremely careful thought to
17 that, because we know that unless we gave forethought to
18 developing our own internal state capacity with really
19 good service providers, that this would not have the
20 benefit of sustainability over time.

21 As someone who has worked in state education for
22 a long time, I have seen too many good ideas come in and
23 then after one particular leader goes away, or a really

1 smart provider is with us, that work is not sustained.

2 That was important to us. So, there are a
3 couple of things. We think really carefully about our
4 external providers. We want to make sure that we have the
5 very best people working with us to build our own capacity
6 within the State, and to then also work with our local
7 superintendent, central office staff and principals, and
8 their instructional leaders in their buildings to make
9 sure that there is that capacity building internalized
10 confidence with all the new sets of skills and tools for
11 providing them.

12 So, in our application, we have identified some
13 service providers, some people that we have a history of
14 working with, so we know that we want to work with the
15 Center for Assessment to help continue developing our
16 thinking about how to build growth models and value added.

17 We do want to continue working with the Dana
18 Center, because they started really good work in
19 Providence, but last year we formed a statewide
20 partnership with them in order to develop curriculum
21 models that could be replicated throughout the state.

22 So, we are going to be aligning all of our work
23 to the Common Core, and our districts are really eager to

1 build model curriculum around the Common Core standard.

2 We know that the Dana Center has limited
3 capacity themselves, so last year we started building
4 statewide capacity to continue that work.

5 We have a group of people we call intermediary
6 service providers, and those intermediary service
7 providers are from higher education. They are some of our
8 very best retired educators in the State and are people
9 who have been providing professional development in Rhode
10 Island anyway.

11 Well, now, we are harnessing all that good
12 thinking and that expertise, and we are training them on a
13 common set of tools and skills, and they are getting
14 certified by the Dana Center.

15 So, our vision is that over several years, the
16 Dana Center will be able to fade out, but we are going to
17 have that core group of people in Rhode Island who will
18 carry on that practice as we need to revise our curriculum
19 and we bring in more intermediary service providers.

20 So, that kind of thinking, that careful plan
21 will be done with all of the people that we bring in for
22 every part of our application.

23 REVIEWER 2: Good. Thank you.

1 MR. BRADY : From a district level
2 point of view, just to follow up on the Dana Center, the
3 past 14 months, at the central district we have had a
4 team, our leadership team that have become so familiar and
5 knowledgeable about the core work from the Dana Center,
6 and we have incorporated our teachers as part of that
7 development, so as you open our core curriculum, you will
8 see the 360 teachers that participated in the professional
9 development sessions to align the standards, so we have
10 the capacity in-house, but we continue to work with the
11 Dana Center, so I think that that is absolutely critical.

12 REVIEWER 3: We went through pretty carefully
13 your plans to bring data to teachers, but we would like a
14 little bit more from you about how you plan to help
15 teachers acquire those skills, so they can actually be
16 associated with them.

17 MS. GIST: Sure, and I am going to actually have
18 Dave follow up on this, but I would just echo what Mary
19 Ann said, that when we set out to put our plan in place,
20 we have been clear from the beginning that these are
21 one-time funds, that we are going to have for a four-year
22 period of time, and everything that we have done has been
23 focused around how we can make this work sustainable.

1 So, under professional development, that is the
2 case, and that is also the case with your question around
3 how we help our educators and develop their data.

4 MR. ABBOTT: What we know about our data systems
5 is that we are very high in terms of data collection, and
6 we have a very high level of functionality within our data
7 warehouse.

8 What we do not have is a high level of use of
9 the information that we are collecting and storing via
10 educators. I think we all, in the industry, talk a lot
11 about data-driven decision-making, and in Rhode Island we
12 have really focused on the decision part of that equation.

13 We think that for too long we have been focusing
14 on collecting the data, you know, storing it, using it to
15 meet reporting requirements, and not really focusing on
16 the decisions that educators need to have better
17 information about.

18 We think that the way we are going to improve
19 instruction is to get more relevant data to the actual
20 users who are making decisions, and we put a lot of work
21 into identifying what those decision points are and then
22 back mapping that into the development of our data system,
23 so that it is not so much about data, it's about use of

1 data.

2 So, you will see in our application that a great
3 deal of the investment we want to make in the data world
4 is actually not in the data systems side of it. In fact,
5 all of the America Competes pieces that were lacking on
6 are all underway right now with our longitudinal data
7 grant.

8 So, we feel very poised to get all that work
9 done. Actually, it has been accelerated, I know we have a
10 lot of 2011 targets in here for that work. I can almost
11 guarantee you that will all be done in the 2010 calendar
12 year, because we really want to be well positioned to
13 focus on the use.

14 So, when you look at our data investments, there
15 is really a heavy emphasis on tools for educators, as well
16 as administrators. There is also the underlying work of
17 the tool kits for the different levels of data dashboards.

18 We have, like I said, a highly functional data
19 system, but right now you would have to be a real data
20 analyst to get at it, and we want to make that data
21 accessible and usable to educators.

22 So, the single biggest investment we are making
23 in data, over \$2 million is around the dashboards and the

1 training of educators in the use of dashboards, which are
2 not static, they are drilled down, real-time data filled
3 that will be not only linked to assessment or
4 accountability data, but you see a very aggressive picture
5 of an instructional management system in our application,
6 and so what we are envisioning and we are really right
7 around the corner from this, is a teacher signing on,
8 looking at not just data sets on data, but also interim
9 assessment data that is benchmarked statewide, as well as
10 access to an item bank of released items and mapped items.
11 We think the Common Core is really going to accelerate our
12 ability to have literally tens, if not, hundreds of
13 thousands of items in an item bank.

14 There is a training component for teachers, so
15 that teachers can pull these items down to do formative
16 assessment. We really are very aggressive about being
17 able to create the continuum of assessments through this
18 instructional management system from the formative
19 assessments by accessing item banks through the use of the
20 interim assessments to the state or the ultimate state
21 assessment, and so we think we are right on the cusp of
22 really being the deliverer of the system that every
23 district can use.

1 I don't want to run out of time on this, I could
2 talk about data forever.

3 GOVERNOR CARCIERI: Could I, at risk of piling
4 on, for 30 seconds, I think, Reviewer 3, we have been at
5 NECAP now for four years. Our teachers are used to seeing
6 that assessment then.

7 What we need to do a better job and part of the
8 system is they need to see the longitudinal data how those
9 students have been progressing before they got to that
10 teacher.

11 We have got the data now, we need to pull it all
12 together and give that, too, but they are used to seeing
13 this kind of assessment data that we have been at it long
14 enough, so they are used to that.

15 REVIEWER 1: Reviewer 3, do you want to take the
16 next question?

17 REVIEWER 4: Can I just actually follow up just
18 quickly on that question? So, you describe the tool in a
19 compelling fashion in the application, as well as
20 web-based delivery of professional development to help
21 educators make use of it, and that is sort of the piece I
22 want to focus on is the use, because I am convinced that
23 the tool will be a good one, and, in fact, what it sounds

1 like.

2 But what are the challenges that you see in
3 getting people to actually use that? Not a design, but
4 sort of the use of it, are there particular skills and
5 objectives that are going to be embedded in that web-based
6 tool, what is the plan there?

7 MS. SNIDER: I think what we have learned right
8 now is that everybody is saying that educators need to use
9 data more frequently, but they don't really know what that
10 means, so we think that part of the solution is having a
11 common set of data for everyone to focus on, so that is
12 one problem.

13 We are doing that. As the Governor said, we
14 have our State assessments. That is a really familiar
15 kind of format for teachers, but we are also building, in
16 response to a need from just about every district in our
17 state, of an equally robust set of tools around interim
18 assessments and formative assessments. That is one piece
19 of the answer is having common data.

20 Second to that is making sure that there is
21 training at every level. From the classroom level,
22 teachers needs to feel comfortable accessing that data and
23 following their students' progress in real time.

1 We don't want them to rely on our state test and
2 the NECAP data, because it's a lagging indicator. We want
3 information in the hands of teachers in real time.

4 So, we are going to equip them with that. We
5 have six days of professional development for every
6 teacher in our state based on this plan, but that is not
7 going to do it alone, because we think another barrier is
8 working within a culture where data is an expected way to
9 work.

10 So, we are making sure that every principal and
11 every central office leader is equally prepared, and that
12 they hold themselves, they model the use of data in all
13 that they do for professional development, for the way
14 they manage teachers being signed, as well as for holding
15 their teachers accountable.

16 So, one of the professional development plans we
17 have is that we are going to tie that formative assessment
18 and that interim assessment training right around when
19 they give those interim assessments, so they will have a
20 professional development day where they are really looking
21 at their student data, and that the principal and teachers
22 are working in partnership to figure out which kids are
23 making progress towards meeting standards, which kids need

1 more support, and what do we, as a learning community,
2 going to do to meet those needs.

3 So, having the data, having the tools, and it's
4 having that expectation and culture where you use that.

5 If we don't address all of those pieces, it
6 won't work.

7 REVIEWER 3: So, the application describes
8 student outcomes on the NAPE and math, so there are some
9 gains there, but maybe lower scores in reading.

10 How is this data then used to hone strategies
11 for persistently underperforming subgroups especially ELL
12 and special education?

13 MS. SNIDER: You are right, we are absolutely
14 concerned about the gaps that we have in our data. We
15 have been looking at that for a number of years, and we
16 are concerned because although Rhode Island is making
17 progress overall, we were really happy when we saw that we
18 were one of a handful of states that made progress of the
19 most recent release of NAPE, the grade score in NAPE.

20 We were equally disappointed when we saw that
21 our Hispanic students were the lowest performing subgroup
22 of Hispanic students in the country. So, we are really
23 well aware of that data. We know that we have about a 20

1 percent achievement gap for Hispanic students in our state
2 testing.

3 We have about a 30 percent gap for our ELL kids,
4 so we have been thinking really, really carefully, and we
5 are in communication with our districts about what needs
6 to be done.

7 So, the first thing is that we know that all
8 gaps are not equal. So, you just can't talk about we will
9 close that gap. That was the message for a while. Well,
10 the gaps are very different.

11 There are some gaps for elementary students in
12 reading, and that takes a very different set of tools and
13 practices than for students who have gaps at the high
14 school level, because they are just entering the country,
15 and they don't have any formal education.

16 So, we need to think carefully about not just
17 that we have gaps, but what is the nature of the gaps, and
18 how are we going to address them. So, for a reading gap,
19 we have talked about things that we have in place.

20 We have personal literacy plans for all of our
21 students. Now, if we can connect that personal literacy
22 plan with real-time data in our data system, we are not
23 going to rely on the NECAP data. We will be having

1 teachers following the growth and progress, and they will
2 have principal leaders and teacher leaders ready to
3 support them, and professional development behind them to
4 make sure that everyone is really well equipped to close
5 those gaps.

6 For English language learners, it's a bit
7 different. It depends when kids come into the system, so
8 we have been talking with our English language learner
9 community about what needs to be done.

10 We do have pockets of excellence in our state,
11 we have the International charter school, and they have
12 done remarkable work over the past few years in a dual
13 language program.

14 They are eager with these resources to share
15 their practices statewide, so that we can have an
16 influence over pre-service education, as well as
17 in-service support, and again moving it into our data
18 system, so we know that we are on the right track and we
19 are ready to tackle these.

20 REVIEWER 4: What is the plan for measuring
21 student growth as it is defined by Race to the Top in
22 subjects and grades that are not tested in NECAP?

23 MS. GIST: Obviously, as with any state, when

1 you start to talk about using your data and your student
2 achievement in different ways, and this is one of the big
3 questions to tackle, and I would actually ask Mary Ann to
4 follow up on this one, as well, but I can just tell you
5 that one of the benefits that we see in Race to the Top is
6 it will give us the resources to be able to do that in
7 ways that we aren't able to now.

8 MS. SNIDER: So, your question is about how are
9 we going to tackle that where we don't have assessments,
10 not so much our methodology for doing it?

11 REVIEWER 4: Right, where there aren't those
12 [inaudible] right now.

13 MS. SNIDER: We have been giving this a lot of
14 thought, and our teachers have been asking us these
15 questions for quite a while, so we have some thoughts.

16 We think that this is a moment in time to
17 capitalize on existing assessments that are in place. One
18 of the things that we are holding ourselves and the
19 schools to is making sure that whatever data we use is
20 rigorous, aligned to our standards, and comparable from
21 classroom to classroom. We think that they need to meet
22 those tests.

23 Once we start looking at everything that is

1 being done right now through that lens, there really are
2 more data sets than we would have thought originally. We
3 know that a lot of our schools are using the DRA reading
4 assessment. That is a great assessment, it's aligned to
5 our standards. We are going to be building models around
6 that.

7 We know that a lot of our schools use AP exams
8 at the high school level. In fact, Providence just built
9 in AP requirements for all of its students as part of
10 their scope and sequence.

11 We want to look at release items to start
12 building pre- and post-testing models. So, we are going
13 to be doing that. We are going to scrub all of the
14 testing that we do and capture those opportunities to
15 apply either value added or growth models in order to
16 inform that 51 percent.

17 REVIEWER 4: So, if teacher pay and incentives
18 and things are to be connected to these measures of
19 student growth, what are the implications of this kind of
20 variable design, grade by grade, subject by subject, for
21 teacher equity, for example, and making Rhode Island an
22 attractive place to be?

23 MS. GIST: Well, I would like Mary Ann to talk

1 about the technical aspects of that, but what I can tell
2 you is that we take this, all of this very seriously. We
3 take the use of data seriously on behalf of our students,
4 but also, when you search and use data in different ways,
5 we know that you have to make sure that the assessments
6 that you are using and the purpose for which they were
7 designed, that it's the purpose for which you are using
8 it, and so we take all of these decisions very, very
9 seriously especially when we start to use them for
10 different purposes.

11 MS. SNIDER: I think what we are really
12 sensitive to is that comparability and fairness from
13 classroom to classroom. That is probably the biggest
14 concern that teachers have, and principals have, because
15 we are holding everyone accountable right now, is our
16 ability to have fair, equitable, and transparent
17 evaluation assistance.

18 On the technical side, what we have decided to
19 do is we are going to do an inventory of all those
20 opportunities to capture growth data and make sure that
21 the methodology that we apply, whether it's value added or
22 growth, are comparable across all of the assessments that
23 will be factored into that 51 percent decision.

1 As I think I mentioned before, we are working
2 with the National Center for the Improvement of
3 Educational Assessments, Brian Gong's group. We have a
4 long relationship with them, and we know that they have
5 been thinking about this, so they are going to help us
6 design that methodology.

7 We are also establishing a Technical Advisory
8 Committee. We think that we are really breaking new
9 ground in this area, so have a TAC for our NECAP
10 assessment.

11 What we are going to do is take some of the very
12 best minds in psychometrics and have them meet with the
13 very best minds in educator evaluation to make sure that
14 our methodology meets all those requirements that
15 educators have asked of us for that 51 percent.

16 I think I can very confidently say that with the
17 kind of people that we have committed to figuring this out
18 with us, that we will make it fair and understandable,
19 because we think if people don't trust the work we are
20 doing, if they are not part of building that system with
21 us, no matter how technically sound it is, they won't
22 trust it, so we are going to have great technical
23 expertise, but we are having educators at the table with

1 us.

2 Forty-four of the 45 districts have signed MOUs,
3 said that they wanted to help us develop and implement
4 that Rhode Island evaluation system.

5 [Interruption by fire alarm.]

6 REVIEWER 4: This follows up a little bit on
7 this question of measuring teacher quality and teacher
8 effectiveness. It seemed in reading the application that
9 there was an inconsistency between the Exhibit 1 part of
10 the MOU that all of the LEAs signed off on and the summary
11 table in the application where it discusses use of
12 evaluation evidence for compensation, tenure, and removal
13 based on student performance.

14 So, I was wondering if you could help us
15 understand that inconsistency. I didn't see those uses
16 identified in the MOUs specifically, so I am wondering
17 about the level of commitment around that.

18 MS. GIST: So you are saying that you didn't see
19 in the MOU that our LEAs were committing to carry those
20 things out?

21 REVIEWER 4: Exactly.

22 MS. GIST: I would actually have Dave speak to
23 the MOU specifically about what I would say about that is

1 everything about our plan, and we have put into place
2 based on the authority that we already know that we have
3 in the plans that we have in place in our strategic
4 agenda.

5 So, the benefit of Race to the Top for us is
6 that it's additional and obviously significant resources
7 to give us tools and professional development and support
8 to be able to carry these out more broadly and more
9 deeply, but our districts are clear that when it comes to
10 evaluation and these other aspects of the requirements
11 within our plan, these are things that we have the ability
12 to move forward with and are already moving forward with.

13 But I would actually ask Dave to follow up on
14 any of that.

15 MR. ABBOTT: Just to build on that, what we
16 tried to do within our application is really focus where
17 we knew we had existing legal authority, and I actually
18 think that that is a huge strength of our application that
19 might not be readily apparent, that virtually everything
20 in our application, we already have the legal authority to
21 do and may even have a board of regents regulations or
22 statutory requirements.

23 So, virtually everything in the Race to the Top

1 application is going to happen, everything in the
2 application is in our strategic plan, and there are a
3 couple of areas within the application where we started to
4 bump up on the outside edge of our existing authority
5 honestly, and compensation is one of those areas.

6 We could have been even more aggressive in the
7 area, but it wouldn't have been as real, and I wouldn't be
8 able to sit here and tell you we can definitely make that
9 happen, because in order to overhaul compensation systems
10 in Rhode Island, you would need an overhaul of a statutory
11 scheme.

12 So, we were very careful in that area as in the
13 other areas, and so the fact that you picked up on that
14 one, I think is instructive that the other areas where you
15 don't see us limiting ourselves to pilots and exploring,
16 that means that we are going to be able to do it.

17 So, all of the other very aggressive areas in
18 the application, existing statutory regulatory authority,
19 and we are going to be moving forward.

20 I think compensation is a little trickier for a
21 couple of reasons. One is that statutory reason. Second
22 is that what we envision is a compensation system that is
23 built on this evaluation and objective data, which we are

1 building, and so we are still a couple of years out from
2 being able to position districts to make compensation
3 decisions based on an evaluation system that is consistent
4 statewide.

5 That is the other element, is that we may be a
6 small state, but we still have 49 LEAs and they are the
7 employers of the teachers, and the State saying that a
8 compensation system is going to be a certain way, saying
9 it don't make it so, because we are very reliant on the
10 LEAs, and the LEAs need to step up and be moving in that
11 direction.

12 I don't know if Tom wants to speak to that. I
13 know that that is a hot topic in Providence.

14 REVIEWER 1: Assume an application has entered
15 an MOU.

16 MR. ABBOTT: Yes.

17 REVIEWER 1: You have modified the MOU and I
18 understand the reasons why, because you can't reinforce
19 something that might not have been negotiated, but the
20 question is, did you note that anyplace where you have
21 modified it?

22 MR. ABBOTT: I believe that we included a copy
23 of the MOU agreement that we used.

1 REVIEWER 1: I understand, and just for clarity
2 purpose, we happened to maybe ask a question because we
3 needed a clarification on it. We have a clarification,
4 and I understand that. I just said it was an issue just
5 to note that.

6 In any union state, that's just the way it is.

7 MR. ABBOTT: Actually, I think we are all
8 talking about paragraph 10 in the MOU, to be very
9 specific.

10 REVIEWER 1: Uh-huh.

11 MR. ABBOTT: By the way, I am also general
12 counsel, so I had a little bit to do with that paragraph,
13 and actually, the language we put out a draft MOU very
14 early on that was virtually the model that we got in our
15 application package, and we got some pushback from our
16 State unions.

17 They offered some language which I looked at,
18 and I said I actually think the language in the federal
19 application is more favorable to labor, but if this is the
20 language you want, because they really, they actually
21 circumscribed what needs to be negotiated more from my
22 perspective than what is in the federal application, but
23 that is language that the unions wanted, so we put that

1 in.

2 But then they have been the tipping point to get
3 AFT to sign off, I don't know.

4 REVIEWER 4: Just in terms of getting all the
5 pieces of the evaluation system ready by 2011, the
6 application describes measuring student achievement,
7 instructional quality, professional responsibility,
8 content knowledge. That's measuring a lot of things for a
9 lot of people every year.

10 I just wondered if you could speak a little bit
11 to the realism of that time line.

12 MS. GIST: Yes, and I will have Mary Ann pick up
13 on this, but I will just say that we have thought through
14 the sequencing very carefully to the extent of having the
15 Gantt charts up where we are looking at like when this
16 rolls in and then this depends on this, and the sequencing
17 is really critical there.

18 Then, I would also say that we listened to our
19 LEAs, and we understand what kinds of support are going to
20 be necessary for them to implement this on the ground, and
21 we built that into our plan, as well.

22 MS. SNIDER: So, we are committed to having this
23 evaluation system up and running beginning in September of

1 2011. The four things that you listed are the components
2 of our evaluation system standard, content, pedagogy,
3 professional responsibilities, and student achievement.

4 So, we were committed to those four pieces.
5 Those really stem from another body of standards that have
6 been long-standing in our state, and those are all about
7 our teachers' standards, our professional leader
8 standards. So, those are all the kinds of things that
9 Rhode Island educators have been focusing on for several
10 years now, and these are very familiar to them.

11 So, we know that the student achievement piece
12 will be part of that 51 percent, but the content,
13 pedagogy, and professional responsibilities will be
14 collected together in that 49 percent.

15 So, we are looking at observational tools, we
16 are looking at surveys that we are in the process of
17 developing right now, to get our feedback from families of
18 students and educators, peers, and all of that information
19 will be just put together.

20 So, we are not really creating a lot of things
21 from new, we are going on the best practices that are
22 existing in our state, and what Race to the Top will allow
23 us to do is to buy that expert advisory group from a

1 partner to help us figure out how to put those together in
2 the fairest and most valid way, and during next year to
3 get everybody trained, so that they can implement that
4 evaluation fairly and consistently.

5 We want to make sure that if you are an
6 effective teacher in Providence, you would also be an
7 effective teacher no matter where you taught in this
8 state.

9 MS. GIST: If I could just add one thing. Is
10 that all right?

11 REVIEWER 3: Yeah, it is all right.

12 MS. GIST: I didn't know if I had time in my
13 four minutes, but just real quickly, I would say that on
14 the ground what we heard is that, you know, evaluation is
15 really done inconsistently in our state right now, both in
16 terms of how it is done, the level of quality is done, and
17 actually, whether it's done.

18 So, our school leaders have varying levels of
19 experience conducting evaluations on a regular basis, and
20 so we have also built into our plans, supports for them,
21 so as we start to roll this out they have someone there,
22 side by side, with them, helping them, to get used to
23 carrying this out, and how to work that into their day,

1 and how to do it in a quality way, and then also to make
2 sure that it is being done consistently across the state.

3 REVIEWER 5: Thank you. I am interested in what
4 sort of union support you have. [Inaudible] had mentioned
5 that IFT have signed on. There is not a lot -- a couple
6 points in the application -- there is not a lot of clarity
7 about the nature of union support particularly around
8 issues of teacher accountability.

9 Can you unpack that a little for me?

10 MS. GIST: Sure. We had two of our local
11 teachers' unions signed their MOUs, as you know, from the
12 application. One was the Providence Teachers' Union and
13 the other was the Foster Teachers' Union.

14 Then, we received a letter of endorsement from
15 our State, American Federation of Teachers of Rhode
16 Island, Federation of Teachers, and what I would say is
17 that we -- there were a number of reasons for this, and I
18 think that the fact that everything was moving quite
19 quickly, there was a lot that we were taking on, and a lot
20 that we have taken on in the last six months.

21 Obviously, this kind of change is challenging
22 for folks, but what we have seen in our state, even thus
23 far, even with really significant changes that we are

1 implementing, that when we remain open to the partnership,
2 and we have continued to move forward, and we don't change
3 what we are doing, but how we do it, that we make sure
4 that we are open to how it gets done, and so when we were
5 talking about the evaluation, for example, we want to have
6 folks at the table when that is developed, so that they
7 have confidence in the system itself.

8 This is what Tom has experienced. I don't want
9 to speak for you, but this is what Tom has experienced
10 with Providence, as well.

11 MR. BRADY: Thank you. You can't say union and
12 describe the whole state, and I can only speak from the
13 largest school district point of view. It's a key issue.

14 We talked about the -- I breathlessly told you
15 in my introduction that we had an assignment system that
16 was changed by force of law, and it happened. That is one
17 approach, but we have found that if we bring those
18 teachers into the union, into the situation, that they
19 will respond.

20 I think that that is a union-by-union,
21 city-by-city decision, but I think that they can see from
22 us, in Providence, that there is national backing, there
23 is some energy.

1 We see the AFT being very involved in the
2 evaluation system and turning grants in our five urban
3 cities, and I am convinced that when we work
4 cooperatively, and that doesn't mean negotiation, that
5 doesn't mean giving away any management rights.

6 I think everybody is pretty clear who is in
7 charge, but you are listening, and they are part of the
8 answer, not part of the solution, not part of the problem,
9 so all that energy goes to good use.

10 So, I think we are, modestly said, Providence is
11 a good example for the rest of the State, and even from
12 this, you can see that State, union, other cities are
13 starting to fall in line.

14 GOVERNOR CARCIERI: Let me, reviewer 5, also,
15 just from a policy backup, because I have dealt with seven
16 years, [inaudible] on every front. I sense a whole change
17 occurring right now.

18 I think that all of the discussion and all of
19 this, and I think one of the beauties of Race to the Top,
20 frankly, it has really got people energized around reform,
21 and it has got, a lot of the unions, you know, in many
22 cases, a little unsure where they are going.

23 But the leadership out of Providence, and there

1 is a couple of things I can't talk about because I can't
2 say anything that wasn't in the application, the more
3 recent activities that are occurring that I think lead me
4 to have a lot more optimism that once this thing starts to
5 roll, we are going to see, I think, most of the major
6 ones, you know, really come on-board.

7 Every union understands they have got to be a
8 part of the solution here. So, it's the first time in my
9 seven years I have seen sort of a sea change that is
10 occurring in that.

11 REVIEWER 5: From that sort of broad brush
12 interest of mine when you cut down to it, much more
13 mechanical thing, it's about the distribution of effective
14 teachers, and how you might get a more equitable
15 distribution of effective teachers across the -- and
16 school leaders in fact -- across the [inaudible] schools
17 or specialty areas, or area of traditional shortages, have
18 a particular, an area where I was struck a little bit with
19 your application as to what you were planning to do.

20 MS. GIST: Well, the first thing I would say is
21 that right now, while we know about highly qualified
22 teachers, I would say that we don't actually know about
23 the distribution of the effectiveness of our teachers, and

1 so, you know, putting our evaluation system into place is
2 going to give us the data that we need to actually be able
3 to make these decisions on behalf of children.

4 So, that is obviously the first step in so many
5 ways, that and our data systems and high-quality data
6 systems. Then, obviously, collecting and having our
7 districts reporting on that data is going to be really
8 important, and our tracking and monitoring of it.

9 There are a couple of things that I think are
10 important about this, and then I will have Mary Ann follow
11 up, but one, I sort of went quickly through the slide, but
12 the commitment that we have made to ensure that no student
13 in our state has an ineffective teacher for more than a
14 year at a time is, we think, a key part of our
15 distribution question, because it is not just distribution
16 across schools or across districts of need, but very
17 specifically to individual students, and so within a
18 school, if a student has an ineffective educator in one
19 grade, literally, that student has to be placed the
20 following year in a classroom with an effective teacher.

21 MS. SNIDER: In addition to what the
22 commissioner just described, I think the other things that
23 we are putting into place is we are creating a different

1 kind of pipeline of getting new teachers into the system.

2 So, part of the commitment we have with TNTP and
3 TFA is to make sure that we get educators in place who
4 have expertise in the STEM areas. Both math and science
5 is a particular area where we know we need additional
6 teaching force, and/or, you know, or special need
7 students, that is one way to get at it.

8 The other way is part of our evaluation system
9 standard requires an LEA to document that they are
10 managing their human capital system in a very different
11 way, so they are taking an annual educator evaluation, and
12 they are making sure that they are deploying staff to the
13 highest need areas, and that they have a much different
14 kind of placement position, so they are balancing that
15 criterion-based hiring practice that Superintendent Brady
16 described, along with looking at their schools and what
17 kinds of needs do their students have, and making sure
18 that those are being met.

19 So, part of our role at the State level is
20 because of our longitudinal data system, we will have all
21 of that educator evaluation data, so we can kind of be
22 following those placement decisions in every district.

23 REVIEWER 1: This is a point kind of, we have

1 had six questions in 36 minutes, so we have got 27 minutes
2 left and seven questions left so just be conscious of
3 that.

4 The next question, Reviewer 5, is you.

5 REVIEWER 5: Okay. It's sort of a speed round.

6 There is very small technical people in the application,
7 and it is about the comparative funding pool of public
8 education between Fiscal Year 2008 and 2009, and we can
9 find 2008 data, we can find projection to 2010, but we
10 can't find 2009. So, what happened, are the State being
11 more on [inaudible], are the states being more on
12 education in 2009 than it did in 2008 or not?

13 MR. ABBOTT: Do you want me to handle it?

14 MS. GIST: Yes, but I just am wondering why it's
15 not there, but, yes, Dave, go ahead.

16 REVIEWER 5: Well, it could be there, I mean
17 [inaudible] pages, you know, could have missed it.

18 MS. GIST: Okay.

19 MR. ABBOTT: In fact, the State spent virtually
20 exactly what they had spent in the previous year, in 2009.
21 The sources of funding did shift somewhat. We were very
22 careful to make sure that we are meeting our
23 proportionality requirements, but we did need to request a

1 waiver of our maintenance of effort at the State level
2 because of the 2006.

3 Honestly, that was primarily because of a drop
4 in higher education funding, but at the state level, the
5 stabilization money did come in and fill a hole that
6 developed in the State budget, so what you are actually
7 seeing -- and I am surprised it is not in there, I hope it
8 really is -- but the 2009, there was no drop, and there
9 has been a drop in 2010 that you did see in the
10 application.

11 REVIEWER 4: That's fine, it's actually not
12 material, 2010 data.

13 REVIEWER 4: I have one other short question. If
14 Commissioner Gist disappears, Governor, what is your bench
15 strength like?

16 GOVERNOR CARCIERI: We just got her, so I hope
17 she is not disappearing. We did an extensive search to
18 get her. You know, I think the beauty is, what I started
19 to say, it took me seven years to get sort of control of
20 the governance. As you know, it changes widely in the
21 States.

22 I have put a lot of new people on the board of
23 regents, and for the first time in my period as governor,

1 we have really got an excellent team there.

2 I think as you can sense in the staff here, it
3 is well embedded, the talent and the skills that know how
4 to do this and what has to be done.

5 Clearly, I don't want Deborah to go anywhere,
6 she is doing a great job in a short period of time. She
7 has become so well know around the State, well respected.

8 We had a rally yesterday that filled the big
9 room at the State House, with a lot of people that came
10 down today, there is just such an enthusiasm right now,
11 and I credit her for igniting that.

12 So, it would be a terrible loss, but I think,
13 like anything else, there is a whole team. You have got
14 the superintendent of one of the major school districts
15 who has got underperforming schools, has grabbed that by
16 the neck, and is doing everything he can to drive it, so
17 there is a commitment throughout, from the State
18 leadership on down.

19 So, I don't want to lose her, but, you know, we
20 would survive.

21 MS. GIST: Very strong team, very strong team.

22 REVIEWER 3: This is just another sort of quick
23 question to clarify things for us. Maybe there is no

1 quick answer, but --

2 MR. ABBOTT: It's the lightning round, so to
3 speak.

4 REVIEWER 3: Yes. Is there or is there not a
5 cap on charter schools? We had to answer it, you have to
6 be able to answer it, yes.

7 MR. ABBOTT: The tricky part in that is
8 answering without violating the protocol about bringing
9 updated information.

10 REVIEWER 3: So, how about when the application
11 was written?

12 MR. ABBOTT: When the application was written,
13 the State statute limited charter schools to 20. Our
14 previous restriction on the geographic distribution of
15 those schools had been lifted earlier in a prior reform
16 two years ago, but even with the 20, which I would not
17 assume continues to exist, even at that point, the statute
18 was expansive enough to allow the regions to open multiple
19 campuses under single charter, so that does not limit us
20 to 20 campuses even under the then existent law.

21 And to the extent that anything had changed,
22 that change would have included the cap on the 4 percent
23 of the student population, so we are very confident, going

1 forward, that we will be able to --

2 GOVERNOR CARCIERI: Very, very confident.

3 MR. ABBOTT: Without giving anything away.

4 REVIEWER 3: Thank you.

5 REVIEWER 4: Can you just [inaudible] mayoral
6 academies in charters --

7 MR. ABBOTT: I can do that, as well. A mayoral
8 academy is actually a form of charter school. Our charter
9 school statute was actually written in three steps, and I
10 know that is because I am actually one of the authors,
11 because I was working for the assembly at the time, the
12 first of which was kind of honestly brought in under a lot
13 of union pressure.

14 It was highly restrictive, and it was a
15 conversion charter primarily where the faculty of an
16 existing public school could vote by 60 percent to become
17 a charter school, but the charter schools remained in
18 district. We actually had two charter school formed under
19 that model.

20 They both happen to be in Providence, and kind
21 of a weird hybrid charter where the LEA retained the
22 school within the district, but they had a set of
23 restrictions, but the teachers remained in the bargaining

1 unit.

2 The second generation really opened it up,
3 allowed existing non-profit organizations to sponsor.
4 That generated another nine charter schools, and then
5 finally, a tenth, all grass-roots organizations out of
6 Rhode Island.

7 A group of mayors, sponsored by Mayor McKee out
8 of Cumberland, created a consortium of mayors, and pitched
9 this idea of the mayoral academy model in which the mayors
10 would serve as the sponsoring organization, not an
11 existing non-profit, and that they would bring in external
12 charter management organizations, and that was really the
13 introduction of bringing in outside providers into Rhode
14 Island.

15 We have one so far under the mayoral umbrella,
16 that is Democracy Prep out of Harlem. They have opened a
17 school serving a mix of suburban and core urban students
18 in Rhode Island. They are one year into theirs. They
19 have very aggressive plans to expand.

20 When the statute was amended to create the third
21 model, the mayoral academy model, they actually got
22 significant more freedoms under our state statute than any
23 of the other charters had. So, their teachers, like other

1 public charters, do not need to be in the bargaining unit.

2 They also do not need to be in the retirement
3 system. The teachers do not need to be paid prevailing
4 wage, which can be overly restrictive cap, and can be
5 overly expensive. There are a number of other freedoms
6 that are theoretically available to charters on a waiver
7 basis, that we have now been asked to grant, that they are
8 granted automatically.

9 So, it is a third model within the statute, but
10 a much more expansive one, and one where we think most of
11 the growth in Rhode Island is going to occur under that
12 model.

13 REVIEWER 4: When the application was written,
14 were mayoral academies subject to that same charter cap
15 that is described, or outside of it?

16 MR. ABBOTT: They actually were the ones who
17 came to us and said, you know, it seems to us like the
18 statute does not limit multiple campuses under an existing
19 charter, and we took a look and said we think you are
20 right.

21 So, they have been, like I said, they are
22 aggressive and thank gosh.

23 REVIEWER 2: Reviewer 4, may I ask a follow-up

1 charter question?

2 REVIEWER 4: Yes, absolutely.

3 REVIEWER 2: It has to do with the conversation
4 you had, Mary Ann, earlier about the curriculum, and you
5 were talking about the dual language standard, and you
6 made reference to the International charter school.

7 Is that international baccalaureate?

8 MS. SNIDER: No, no, it is not. It's a K5
9 elementary international charter school.

10 MS.GIST: Dual, tri-language?

11 MS. SNIDER: Tri-language, Portuguese, Spanish,
12 and English.

13 REVIEWER 2: So, the international in the title,
14 is it a curriculum-based title, I mean is the title
15 derivative of the organization that is sponsoring the
16 school, or standard?

17 MS. GIST: It is actually based on the
18 organization that originally sponsored the charter school,
19 but I think now it signifies their commitment to a more
20 cultural kind of environment.

21 REVIEWER 2: Thank you. Thank you, Reviewer 4.

22 REVIEWER 3: Next question. Could you talk to
23 us a little bit about why reaching out to

1 under-represented groups isolated from math and science in
2 the plan for developing scope and sequence, so why are
3 these groups isolated from math and science?

4 MS. GIST: Why are which groups?

5 REVIEWER 3: Girls and students who are normally
6 under-represented in math and science.

7 MR. ABBOTT: Well, I will jump in on that one.
8 I think there are a couple of things that we are concerned
9 about. One is actually facilities based. We have a
10 number of high schools that are actually unable, because
11 of lack of lab space, to even offer, you know, classes at
12 the level of rigor.

13 We also have put a lot of work, especially in
14 our core urban areas, about under-representation in higher
15 rigor classes.

16 Just as one quick example, you will see in I
17 believe it's the discussion in E, we talk about some of
18 our early intervention work, and there is a description of
19 intervention with an urban district with two high schools
20 in which we had to get in there and have them completely
21 redo their core selection, because basically, when we went
22 in and did an audit, what we were finding is that students
23 that were dropping out, and students that were failing

1 out, were actually not even getting access to classes that
2 had been mapped to the curriculum.

3 So, we were finding large segments of the
4 student population that were not even being given access
5 to courses that would adequately prepare them, and so it
6 wasn't so much a gender issue for us as it was an
7 under-representation of rigorous coursework in math and
8 science specifically, honestly, to our racial and ethnic
9 subpopulations which we have been working very hard to
10 address.

11 REVIEWER 1: Reviewer 3, Reviewer 4 said that
12 the next question had been taken care of, and that puts
13 you down to No. 11. Go ahead.

14 REVIEWER 3: Sure. When I had this question
15 before you gave the presentation, but I think there are
16 some things I would still like to know about, so this has
17 to do with the promise to students that no child would get
18 an ineffective teacher two years in a row.

19 You have explained sort of how you will
20 determine who is ineffective, but I am thinking about the
21 logistics of this.

22 I am wondering if you can give an example of how
23 you would solve this problem especially, say in a school

1 that maybe has a lot of teachers that aren't effective,
2 say, maybe they are on their way there, or they are coming
3 out of being ineffective, or something like that, and sort
4 of what the supply looks like to getting people in that
5 make this promise something you could actually do.

6 MS. GIST: Right. Well, we have given that a
7 lot of thought, as well, and took that very seriously when
8 we made that commitment, and I would say that there are
9 several things that are included in that.

10 For one thing, with this information, we also
11 have made the commitment that any educator who receives
12 two evaluations of ineffective in a row will not be able
13 to be, continue to be employed by the district.

14 So, that alone gives the district the
15 responsibility and the ability to move people on when they
16 are not responding to the support and professional
17 development that they are being provided.

18 So, people will not be saying in the system that
19 they are ineffective. But also in the meantime, there is
20 a lot that has to happen logistically between and in
21 cooperation with the State and the district around
22 placements.

23 Quite honestly, we see the [inaudible] limit as

1 you describe it as part of the pressure for us to put upon
2 our districts, to say that by making this declaration,
3 there is that much more urgency around dealing with people
4 who are ineffective, both by helping them get better and
5 improve their skills but also as necessary to make
6 decisions about when people need to move on.

7 MS. SNIDER: There are really two kinds of
8 scenarios. One is where you are a fairly healthy school,
9 and there might be one or -- and we are hoping that this
10 is the case -- more often than not, there are a couple of
11 ineffective teachers, and then your placement decisions
12 can really easily manage around that, but even that will
13 have to be given some thought to make sure that some
14 student isn't given an ineffective teacher for two
15 consecutive years.

16 I think the dilemma that you are pointing out,
17 Reviewer 3, is in a school that might have been identified
18 were, you know, you might have an entire math team, and
19 everyone is ineffective.

20 That puts us in a different kind of dilemma, and
21 that is where the urgency comes in, and that is where our
22 rigorous evaluation even beginning next year in 2010-2011,
23 to make sure whether or not we need to bring in, manage

1 that teaching staff throughout the district and bring in
2 other teachers, so that school would have teachers who are
3 more capable, and that is the work that we have ahead of
4 us.

5 REVIEWER 4: Then just to -- I am sorry.

6 MR. ABBOTT: I was just going to pile on a
7 little bit, because this is an area that is not wishful
8 thinking, and, you know, as Deborah said in her opening
9 remarks, this basic education program, which is a legal
10 document, and has force of law, we talk about the
11 management responsibilities in that document, and one of
12 the most important is this embodiment of that very
13 requirement.

14 In fact, the BEP goes further than that, and
15 creates a legal entitlement to every child that they be in
16 front of an effective teacher every year.

17 To some extent, there is [inaudible] in front of
18 an ineffective teacher two years in a row is an
19 incremental step, because where our -- you know, and I
20 think Tom would echo this -- we have spent a lot of time
21 together recently around this criterion-based hiring, and
22 the order that he is referring to actually requires that
23 the District develop a matching system.

1 So, you know, we have talked a lot about the
2 identification of the teacher side of this, but actually,
3 the BEP is just as strong in emphasizing the student
4 identification, because what we are envisioning is a
5 system where the data are strong enough that a district
6 makes a management decision matching a teacher based on
7 history of effectiveness with students based on a history
8 of need.

9 The identification and placement of students in
10 this equation is at least as important as the
11 effectiveness of the teacher, and so we are expecting them
12 -- and it's actually a legal requirement -- that they
13 develop the human capital systems that are linked to data
14 to make these matches.

15 So, it's -- you know, what we have found is that
16 the devil is in the details in developing the systems that
17 can pull that off, and we know it's ambitious, but it is
18 really the only way to go.

19 REVIEWER 4: So, just to push a little bit
20 further on this, I can see more ease with the system with
21 new teachers who have yet to be tenured, but I imagine you
22 mostly have tenures teachers or people who have been
23 around longer.

1 How, I mean I would say that up until now, it
2 has been very hard to get rid of a tenured teacher. In
3 big districts, they can barely get rid of any. I can only
4 imagine how it is in a small state, so what is the
5 strategy for someone who has already been tenured, and has
6 now received an ineffective rating?

7 MR. ABBOTT: Can I jump in on that one, too,
8 because before I came to the Department, I represented
9 school districts, and so did a number of these, and so I
10 can tell you that where the system is failing is actually
11 not on the rigor of the defense from the union side, is
12 actually on the lack of capacity on the administrative
13 side to actually have the systems in place.

14 I think I, and all of us, were extremely
15 encouraged by Brandy Weingarten's recent foray into this
16 just a couple of weeks ago, who laid out something that I
17 have been saying for a couple of years, and it was like I
18 had written that, because what AFT is saying is if you
19 have a very strong front end on the human capital system,
20 if you have clear standards for teachers, if you have good
21 standards for training the evaluators, if you have a good
22 data system, if you can prove that it is fair, if you have
23 kind of a response to intervention model, where you are

1 bringing supports to teachers based on the specific
2 evaluation data that you are generating, if you have those
3 four core elements, you can foreshorten the due processing
4 system on the back end.

5 Right now I think you are not seeing a lot of
6 ineffective teachers exit the system, because it is just
7 the opposite. You know, the systems aren't mature, they
8 are generating very little data on the front end, and the
9 due process looks like this, and your legal bill looks
10 like this, and so there is a great hesitancy to wade in.

11 So, what we are saying is we are really pushing
12 on the management side. Every union leader that we work
13 with says you need to get this right. I am sorry --

14 REVIEWER 1: I think it's a great answer.
15 Reviewer 4, you have four minutes for your question.

16 REVIEWER 4: You talked a lot about improving
17 the quality of incoming discussion of training new
18 principals, training new teachers, raising the bar for
19 incoming, what about those who are presently employed,
20 what is the plan there for facilitating ongoing
21 improvement with the majority of folks who are going to be
22 there for a while, and not just at the school level, but
23 also at the district level, where there may be a lack of

1 capacity in the central office?

2 MS. GIST: For leaders specifically?

3 REVIEWER 4: Right, for people in place now, who
4 you expect to stay for another 10, 20 years.

5 MS. GIST: Right. Well, I mean I would actually
6 say that that is a really important part of our theory of
7 action, that, in order to have an effective teacher in
8 every classroom, we have to have effective leaders, we
9 have to have effective leaders at the school level, and we
10 have to have effective leaders at the district level.

11 So, you saw in our plan that we are intending to
12 put into place, the Academy of School Leadership, and one
13 of the first things that will happen with the Academy of
14 School Leadership is bringing teams of leaders from the
15 districts.

16 We did that specifically for that sustainability
17 reason, that we know that it is not just one leader, it
18 can't just be the superintendent, it can't just be a
19 principal, but it has to be a whole team of people
20 including teachers, because we believe teachers should be
21 a part of that leadership team to receive that
22 professional development.

23 Do you want to pick up on this?

1 MS. SNIDER: Sure. We have embedded, you know,
2 I have a little bit of a list, we have formative
3 assessment training, we have interim assessment training,
4 instructional management we can support.

5 We have an intensive four-week summer-long
6 training for those schools that have been identified above
7 and beyond the fact that we have already identified as
8 part of our Title I(g). Embedded in every professional
9 development is a school leader with instructional leaders
10 within that building, so that they will know, they will go
11 through all the training that their teaching staff will go
12 through, so that way they are comfortable in ensuring that
13 the teachers are -- they are supported, because I know
14 that their principal understands what they have to do and
15 can hold them accountable for that, and support them if
16 they are struggling with that.

17 So, the entire application is replete with that.

18 MS. GIST: And just one last thing I would say
19 is that for the sustainability point of that, it is the
20 involvement of our higher education and our current
21 professional development providers that makes this an
22 embedded part of the way that our state goes about our
23 work.

1 MR. BRADY: One other last thing on that, to
2 give you an example of how this will accelerate, in
3 Providence, we have had an aspiring principal program for
4 the last couple of years that was grant funded, and we
5 have seen the results from that program.

6 The State, in our plan, is even more inclusive,
7 so I am very, very supportive of that.

8 MS. SNIDER: We have talked about a series of
9 modules that will be part of our leadership academy. We
10 have been in conversation with John Seer [ph], I think you
11 read that in our application, we said what are those
12 skills that really good principals have under their belt,
13 so that we would make sure that if we were training new
14 turnaround principles, they would go through a year-long,
15 intensive training, working in the school that they might
16 take over the following year.

17 But we knew that there was a hunger and a desire
18 among our existing leadership, whether they were central
19 office staff or principals, so we thought wouldn't it be
20 nice, over time, for principals to say, you know, I really
21 have a difficult time having hard conversations with my
22 staff. You could go and sign up for a module of that, and
23 get supported in the leadership academy.

1 So, those are the kinds of ways we are thinking
2 of developing new leaders and supporting the --

3 MS. GIST: And capturing those electronically,
4 so that they can constantly be used.

5 REVIEWER 1: Good job. If I may, I don't know
6 who you would like to answer this question, but as the
7 result of embracing the four components of the Race to the
8 Top program, how will high schools and high school classes
9 be different five years from now?

10 MS. GIST: Oh, I would say that when you look at
11 our theory of action, I would say that the primary thing
12 will be the quality of our classroom teachers and the kind
13 of supports they have to ensure that students are
14 achieving.

15 There are several things that will be different
16 about that. Those educators will have a curriculum that
17 they know and that they are confident is tightly aligned
18 to our standards, and they will be providing supports to
19 their students because of the interim and formative
20 assessments that they will have, and data that they have
21 about how their students are doing, so that they can
22 intervene and ensure that students are making progress.

23 MS. SNIDER: I will just add that I think five

1 years from now, part of the money that will be used in our
2 districts that are struggling will be used to do ramp-up
3 support for those kids currently in high school, who have
4 big gaps in their learning.

5 So, the job for the next intervening years will
6 be to give them ramp-up support, credit recovery, and
7 those sorts of things. Five years from now, I fully
8 expect, and I am really confident that kids entering high
9 school will be ready to engage in age-appropriate
10 coursework, that they will have access to virtual courses,
11 that they will have multiple pathways.

12 Embedded in our PBGR, the proficiency-based
13 graduation requirements, not only do we say that every
14 student has to be college and career ready by the end of
15 tenth grade, we have also planned for even more rigorous
16 coursework in the eleventh and twelfth grade, so if you
17 are a student who really has a focus in the STEM area, you
18 could start engaging in dual college enrollment. We have
19 got a plan worked out with higher ed. in order to do that.

20 However, if you are a student who is passionate
21 about the arts, you would have an opportunity to do a
22 residency with a local artist at perhaps the Rhode Island
23 School of Design.

1 Embedded in our regulation, we call it your area
2 of specialized interest, so those final two years of high
3 school, if you have all the preparation you need in the
4 basics, and you can read and write and do math, and you
5 are a good student, we can either propel you on to college
6 earlier, or give you a couple of years to really deeply
7 explore where your passions are, so when you leave our
8 high schools, you are ready to take on the world, like my
9 20-year-old thinks he is. We want that for all kids in
10 our state.

11 MR. BRADY: I think Mary Ann and the
12 Commissioner will -- it's an intriguing question, and we
13 still have two minutes and 24 seconds, so as I thought
14 back, I look back five years from how, we have highlighted
15 the curriculum difference, there will be a curriculum that
16 people are aware of, and they have been working with.

17 Teachers who know how to use that, principals
18 who have been through training and have changed the lives
19 of those students, we didn't talk about career and
20 technical education, which we have just opened a career
21 and technical education academy.

22 We have an extended school day and our students
23 meet academic rigors, but it is also extended, so at the

1 end of their time, they will have an industry standard
2 certification in seven different important industries.

3 That is not to be overlooked. I see more health
4 services. I see more of a change of meeting the needs of
5 the economy in a state that needs qualified and trained
6 workers, managers, and entrepreneurs, and so five years
7 from now, I see that as an expansion throughout
8 Providence, and I am very excited about that.

9 MR. ABBOTT: I want to give the Governor the
10 last minute. I just want to say that there will be more
11 students in high schools. Our dropout rate in our urban
12 schools will decrease significantly, and the kids that are
13 in school will be significantly more engaged.

14 GOVERNOR CARCIERI: I think, you know, it's a
15 great, great, great question, Reviewer 1, and I think I am
16 a believer. When you look at the schools that are meeting
17 the students' needs and students are progressing, there is
18 an excitement.

19 Success breeds success, and we have all been in
20 schools -- and we have got a bunch of them now -- where
21 the opposite is happening, the environment is not
22 bolstering because it is not a successful environment.

23 The net result of all that we are doing here is

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