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NEWS RELEASE

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All R.I. Teachers to be Evaluated at Least Annually

Educator effectiveness to be determined by student growth, academic achievement

All Rhode Island teachers will be evaluated at least once a year, following the historic vote tonight by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education.

At its meeting tonight (December 3rd, 2009) at Lincoln Senior High School, the Board approved the first-ever standards for evaluation systems for teachers and other educators. From now on, all evaluation systems will provide feedback on performance, create incentives for highly effective educators, and improve the performance of or remove ineffective educators.

Under the new Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards, "an educator's overall effectiveness is to be determined by evidence of impact on student growth and academic achievement." The evaluations must include observations of practice, and evaluators should seek feedback from supervisors, colleagues, students, and families.

The Regents also approved the first Educator Code of Professional Responsibility, which will "guide professional conduct" of educators in "all situations with professional and ethical implications." The code "embraces the fundamental belief that the student is the foremost reason for the existence of the [teaching] profession." The code will "serve as a basis for decisions" regarding certification and employment.

"The new evaluation system will help Rhode Island to improve educator quality by attracting, mentoring, and retaining top teachers and education leaders," said Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents. "The evaluation process will be fair to educators because it will be tied to existing standards and expectations and because it will be consistent across all districts. These votes will help to ensure that we have excellent educators in every school and classroom."

"By approving these new standards for evaluation systems and the Code of Professional Responsibility, the Regents have acted in the best interest of our students," said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. "I have said many times that the single most important factor in the education of our students is the effectiveness of their teachers. These new standards, which emphasize student achievement and professional growth for all educators, are a big step in our work to transform Rhode Island education."

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) will develop evaluation-system templates, which districts may adopt or modify, subject to the Commissioner's approval. RIDE will post the standards and the code on its Web site, www.ride.ri.gov.

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