



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Peter McWalters
Commissioner

April 7, 2009

Mr. Thomas M. Brady, Superintendent
Providence Public School District
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903-4045

Dear Superintendent Brady:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the Providence Public School District (PPSD) document entitled, *The Providence School District Proposal for Criterion-Based Hiring and Transfer and Need-Driven Instructional Assignments*, dated March 25, 2009, and last updated today, April 7, 2009. This document, hereinafter referred to as the "*Protocol*," was prepared by the District as a partial response to my letter dated February 17, 2009. Said letter set forth six (6) separate, but interlocking Orders. It is my understanding that the *Protocol* is PPSD's response to Order No. 1 (Protocol for the Assignment of Highly Effective Staff to High Need Schools and Classrooms) in its entirety, as well as a partial implementation plan for Order No. 2 (Implementation of a Staffing Stability Plan). Finally, it is my understanding that the *Protocol* directly addresses that portion of Order No. 1 that requires the district to come into full compliance with applicable law in order that the Providence School Board and the Superintendent are able to meet your respective statutory obligations.

During our April 3, 2009 meeting that occurred between us and our respective senior staffs, it was made clear that the *Protocol* is a PPSD document, but that over six hours were spent with the Providence Teachers' Union discussing specific points contained therein – and that numerous adjustments were made to proposed language as a result. I appreciate the clarity with which these changes were identified. During our meeting of April 3rd, I asked PPSD to provide additional clarifications in the following areas:

- A clearer description of an appeals process for teachers affected by the proposed teacher assignment protocol;
- Specifying in the *Protocol* the required changes to the District's school improvement team structure and PPSD/PTU program review committee in order to achieve compliance with explicit management responsibilities set forth in statute; and,
- Several minor edits needed for purposes of clarity and equitable application.

Telephone (401)222-4600 **Fax** (401)222-6178 **TTY** 800-745-5555 **Voice** 800-745-6575

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I see the *Protocol* as a work in progress and fully understand the need for a prompt response from this agency in order to ensure its implementation for the 2009-2010 school year as previously ordered.

Having now had the opportunity to review your revised *Protocol*, I am satisfied that PPSD fully addresses the complement of issues set forth in Order No. 1 and partially addresses the issues set forth in Order No. 2 as contained in my correspondence dated February 17, 2009. I make this determination with two caveats. First, a protocol, no matter how artfully crafted, remains a plan until fully implemented. Second, I recognize that crafting a workable plan of implementation has necessitated going beyond the strict dictates of the language of the aforementioned Orders.

Accordingly, I will be directing my staff to devise a plan for monitoring the implementation of those aspects of the *Protocol* that are required by Orders Nos. 1 and 2. As with previous RIDE visitation and monitoring efforts, our Department will work with your staff to ensure that said monitoring serves to inform both the state and district leadership and is performed in the least intrusive manner possible.

Congratulations on the quick and comprehensive work PPSD has been able to accomplish in a very short time frame. I would appreciate being kept well-informed on your ongoing implementation efforts, especially in regard to managing this far-reaching work in collaboration with affected collective bargaining units. Finally, I look forward to receiving specific details and/or other protocols for the full implementation of the remainder of Orders 2 through 6 at your earliest convenience.

Very truly yours,



Peter McWalters,
Commissioner

cc: Honorable Mayor David N. Cicilline
Providence School Board
Sharon Contreras, Chief Academic Officer
Steven F. Smith, President of Providence Teachers Union
Larry Roberti, President, APPSSA
Don Iannazzi, President, Local 1033
David V. Abbott, Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel