

# NCLB Making a Difference in Rhode Island



- Between 2002 and 2004 (latest data available):
  - Fourth-grade reading proficiency increased by four percentage points
  - Fourth-grade mathematics proficiency increased by seven percentage points
  - The black-white achievement gap in fourth-grade reading narrowed by seven percentage points
  - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fourth-grade reading narrowed by five percentage points
  - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fourth-grade mathematics narrowed by three percentage points  
(*Education Trust*)
- “The state Department of Education has hired eight outside experts to go into Providence’s six troubled middle schools and two high schools to help them improve student achievement. ... These so-called turn-around specialists will not take over the schools or replace the existing principals, nor will they tell the schools how to improve. Rather, they will work with the school’s staff to identify weaknesses in discipline, instruction or teacher training, then come up with ways to solve the problems. ... Perry Middle School will serve as a model for the new turn-around team. In January 2004, Perry became the first school in Rhode Island to be classified as needing corrective action. ... Three new principals or deans worked closely with a group of committed teachers to improve school climate. They brought in an outside expert to help them deal with disciplinary issues. Working together, faculty and staff began an extensive after-school program to give struggling students a chance to catch up.” (*Providence Journal*, 7/8/05)
- “By conventional standards, [Providence’s] Sullivan School might hardly be thought to have the makings of success, with eight out of 10 students living in poverty and two out of three of their mothers lacking a high school diploma. However, a recent report of the state’s school accountability program says that it is exactly these students – all 219 of them – who are ‘strongly developing problem-solving skills’ and ‘understand the power of words.’ ... Between 2000 and 2004, achievement in most categories tested by the state has risen dramatically. For example, the proportion of students who achieved or exceeded standards for basic mathematical skills doubled, from 23 percent to 57 percent...” (*Providence Journal*, 6/2/05)
- “Rhode Island and 12 other states have signed onto a broad effort to transform the traditional high school, raising the bar on academics while ensuring that more students remain engaged long enough to graduate. ... This year, 1,100 eighth-graders in Providence – more than half of a class of 2,000 from nine middle schools – have signed on as Rhode Island Scholars, up from about 700 during the initial effort last spring, according to Hillary Salmons, vice president of the Education Partnership. In Portsmouth, there are 130 Rhode Island Scholars out of a class of 263. In West Warwick, 89 of 299 have signed up, and in Westerly, 122 out of 297 eighth-graders have pledged to ask for the most rigorous courses. Businessmen and women and professionals, working with school officials in each of the school districts, are expected to develop their own approaches to maintaining students’ commitment to a challenging curriculum, Salmons said, and helping those falling behind to catch up.” (*Providence Journal*, 3/4/05)