


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

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

July 20, 2009

TO: All Superintendents, Directors of State-Operated Schools, and Charter Schools

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: Scheduling Visits to Districts and Schools

Thank you so much to all of you who have extended invitations to me to visit your educational programs. I have met many of you during my first weeks as Commissioner of Education, and I look forward to meeting all of you in the coming weeks.

As Commissioner, I will reach out to work with those who know our students best – parents, educators (including teachers, principals, superintendents, school committees, and labor unions) and students themselves as we work together to advance learning for all. I want to hear about your success stories, your greatest challenges, and your aspirations for Rhode Island students.

As part of my 100-Day Entry Plan for listening and learning from Rhode Islanders, I will visit every district, charter school, and state-operated school by the end of October 2009. The information I gather on these visits will be valuable as we develop plans to improve the performance of all of our students and to address the inequities contributing to our achievement gaps.

During the week of August 3 – 7, a member of my 100-Day Team will contact you to schedule my visit. This visit will be an opportunity for your school community to share your accomplishments, to express your concerns, and to open a channel of communication between us. I value spending time with students and teachers, and I look forward to hearing from other key stakeholders as well. The draft schedule below, which includes sample morning and afternoon sessions, provides a potential visit framework that the team will review with you and adjust based on your input.

When my team contacts you, please indicate a specific location for my visit. Careful planning will ensure that our time together is both successful and productive and showcases what is most important to your district or school. Additionally, I would love to participate in first day of school activities; please let my team know of any opportunities for me to share the start of the school year with your community.

If you have any questions regarding the scheduling of this visit, please contact our 100-Day Team Lead for District & School Visits, Becky Bessette, at 222-4253 or at Becky.Bessette@ride.ri.gov.

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SAMPLE SCHEDULE

TIME – Morning visit	Sample schedule	Participants
30-40 minutes in morning before or at the start of school	9:00 – 9:30 (elementary) 7:30 - 8:00 (secondary) Meet members of School Committee, SIT members, parent group, and Superintendent	School Committee Parents Central office SIT team members
**		
30/45 minutes – Block 1	9:30 – 10:15 (elementary) 8:00 – 8:45 (secondary) Meet with students	Teachers or students
30/45 minutes – Block 2	10:15 – 10:45 (elementary) 8:45 – 9:15 (secondary) Meet with teachers	Teachers or students
**45 minutes	10:45 – 11:30 (elementary) 9:15 – 10:00 (secondary) Meet with school principal and leadership team – will include some teachers so the teacher time can be kept to 30 minutes	School leaders – principals, assistant principals, PBGR coordinators, program specialists, special education directors, etc.

TIME – Afternoon visit	Sample schedule	Participants
**45 minutes	12:45 – 1:30pm (elementary) 11:15 – noon (secondary) Meet with principal, team leaders, assistant principal	School leaders – principals, assistant principals, PBGR coordinators, program specialists, special education directors, etc.
30/45 minutes – Block 1	1:30 – 2:00pm (elementary) Noon-12:30 (secondary) Meet with teachers	Teachers or students
30/45 minutes – Block 2	2:00 - 2:45pm (elementary) 12:30 – 1:15 (secondary) Meet with students	Teachers or students
**		
30-40 minutes in afternoon at end of day	3:00 – 3:30 (elementary) 1:15 – 2:00 (secondary) Meet with members of SIT, superintendent, parent group	School Committee Parents Central office SIT Team members

** School leadership can meet before or after the student/teacher blocks