



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

September 30, 2009



Dear Students,

During the first weeks of the school year, I have been visiting schools across the state, and I have enjoyed meeting so many excellent teachers and great students. Thank you for your warm welcome! I am confident that each of you will have a wonderful and challenging year of teaching and learning.

As some of you may know, on Thursday (October 1st) we will begin our annual state tests in reading, writing, and math. I know that your teachers have been working hard to prepare you for these tests. Some of you may be reviewing lessons that you studied last year. Some of you may be exploring new material. Some teachers may be sharing with you practice items from previous state tests. All of this work will help you perform at your very best.

I'm sure at times you have wondered why we test you and your fellow students every year. First of all, we need to know how well our students are doing in math, reading, and writing. When we're doing well, we'd like the world to know that Rhode Island is a great place to live, work, and go to school. We also need to see where we're not doing well. Teachers will study the test results to see what questions students missed – so that they can improve their teaching, every year. Your families will also receive your test results, which will help them see how well you've been doing in school. They can look at these results, along with your school work and your report cards, when they meet with your teachers to discuss your progress and your goals.

We all want you to perform at your very best on these tests. So keep coming to school regularly, pay attention in class, and keep up with your homework. On testing days, get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast. I believe that each of you is capable of high achievement, and I commit to working tirelessly to ensure that you receive the high-quality education you deserve.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

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