

National Center for Educational Accountability

national sponsor of Just for the Kids

Rhode Island's Best Practice Institute: Honoring and learning from exemplary education practices

The Purpose

The Rhode Island Best Practice Institute is an important day-long research project to interview high-performing educators about the system and school practices that are increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps between student populations. It is hoped that these practices can then be articulated for use by other educators in the state for school improvement. This is also a perfect opportunity to celebrate the incredible success of educators from high-performing schools in Rhode Island who are serving challenging students effectively and are providing the leadership for school improvement in their communities.

The Participants

The Best Practice Institute will include superintendents, building principals, and classroom teachers from 5 consistently high performing elementary schools in Rhode Island. These schools are chosen for their record of student achievement demonstrated by having all major student groups reach state standards for proficiency consistently in every grade and subject tested over the past three years. Educators will join researchers from the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) in a day of dialogue and exchange about the specific

educational practices that distinguish their schools from other schools in the state.

The 5 elementary schools chosen to participate in the 2005 Institute include:

Francis J. Varieur School, Pawtucket School District, Pawtucket, RI

Bradford Elementary School, Westerly School District, Bradford, RI

Chester W. Barrows School, Cranston School District, Cranston, RI

Tiogogue School, Coventry School District, Coventry, RI

Hope Valley Elementary School, Chariho School District, Hope Valley, RI

The Outcomes

While educators often have information on strategies used in their own school, they may have little information about strategies or practices in other schools—particularly the specific practices of consistently high-performing schools. The findings from the day's exchange with superintendents, principals, and teachers will be compiled and disseminated in a format useful

Cheryl Ross - Grade 4
D. Richtarik - Principal attended the workshop

to educators across the state.

The Institute is a means of demonstrating the value of conducting a full statewide study of best practices in Rhode Island. The results from the full statewide study, should the state choose to conduct one, are made publicly available in an easily understandable framework for use by educators and are made part of a searchable data base of practices from 14 other states on the Just for the Kids website.

Schools and districts in need of improvement can immediately use the *Framework of School System Practices* and *Self-Audit* tools online as a starting point to structure plans and improvement strategies.

While this first year Institute is an preliminary step toward examining successful practices in Rhode Island, we are working with the State Department of Education to use the Institute as a catalyst to start a partnership with Just for the Kids in a focused effort to improve student learning through the effective use of school and student data and the identification of successful practices in the state.

More about NCEA and Just for the Kids

The National Center for Educational Accountability's mission is to inform, inspire, and improve learning through the effective use of school and student data and the identification and

replication of best practices found in high-performing districts, schools, and classrooms. Its methods are data-driven and evidence-based, using achievement data as a means to shine a light on what high-performing schools and districts are doing to find success.

NCEA is in its tenth year of service and in its eighth year of hosting the national public website for 38 states that provides "school reports" on the status of achievement and potential for improvement of every school by grade and subject. NCEA is in its fifth year of conducting studies of practices in more than 350 consistently high-performing schools and districts (now in fourteen states). The findings of best practices from this research are all posted on our website for use in professional development and school improvement strategies.

Contact us

The National Center for Educational Accountability is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Sponsoring organizations include Just for the Kids, The University of Texas at Austin, and the Education Commission of the States. Visit our website at: www.just4kids.org.

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