



**RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
One Corliss Park  
Providence, RI 02908

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April 15, 2011

Dear Parents, Students, Families, Educators, Stakeholders and Community Members,

On March, 29, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education identified our school, the *Rhode Island School for the Deaf*, as one of Rhode Island's Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) schools. Identification of our school as a PLA was determined by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) through a review of student performance data, including their overall instructional growth, and whether or not they've made improvements in reading and math.

The Board of Trustees must now lead an effort to change this. There are several things that happen now that we have been identified as a PLA school. We are expected to follow a process that includes thinking carefully about the needs of the school, reflecting on what needs stand out as most important, and making a recommendation to the Commissioner of Education about which of four reform models will help us turn the school around. We are expected to invite community input in these important discussions. All stakeholders – Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing educators, special educators, parents, students and members of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community – are invited to offer their thoughts during the process for selection of the most appropriate reform model.

We will be holding two (2) stakeholder meetings to gather input. The first stakeholder meeting is on **Tuesday, April 26, 7pm to 9pm** and the second stakeholder meeting is on **Saturday, April 30, 10am to 12pm**; both at the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. These meetings will provide the opportunity for you to learn more about the process and timeline, to ask questions and to make recommendations related to model selection. Please make every effort to be with us. *Your input matters and we encourage every family to try to be present for at least one of these important conversations.*

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) through the *Office of Transformation* will be providing our faculty, staff and families with support and guidance throughout this process. The Transformation Office will ensure that we comply with the federal requirements for schools identified as persistently lowest achieving, and will be available to answer your questions at both stakeholder meetings.

Through the Rhode Island School for the Deaf website, [www.rideaf.net](http://www.rideaf.net), you can see an overview of the four reform models, read updates from the Board of Trustees or send in comments. We are hopeful that you will be able to join us, but if you cannot attend you may use the website to submit comments or recommendations in writing.

If you have any immediate questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact Mary Pendergast, Director of Special Education, [mpendergast@rideaf.net](mailto:mpendergast@rideaf.net) and 401-243-1026. You may also contact me, [tzellner@rideaf.net](mailto:tzellner@rideaf.net) and 774-999-0715.

We thank you and look forward to working with you to support our students' learning and success.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis R. Zellner".

Travis R. Zellner  
Board of Trustees, Chairperson

**Interpreters for the Deaf will be provided at this meeting. CART services will also be provided. If your participation requires other accommodations, please contact the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, 222-3525 or 222-3888 or fax 222-6998 at least 72 hours prior to this meeting.**