



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 13, 2012

David M. Dooley, Ph. D.
President, The University of Rhode Island
Green Hall
35 Campus Avenue
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881

Dear President Dooley:

As I outlined in a memo on February 8, 2011, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has temporarily suspended the Rhode Island Program Approval process to allow us to focus on the redesign of the program approval process as well as how to incorporate educator evaluation work with our preparation programs. During this temporary suspension, RIDE staff members are conducting one day visits to preparation programs in order to follow up on any significant recommendations that were made during the programs' last visit and to review the progress programs are making towards meeting the Rhode Island Program Approval standards. Programs that successfully complete the Extension Review will have their approval decision from the previous full RIPA visit extended for up to three years.

RIDE conducted an Extension Review to all of the Educator Preparation Programs at the University of Rhode Island on April 26, 2012. As part of the Extension Review process, visit team members reviewed documents, electronic evidence, and interviewed program administrators, faculty, and staff. It was determined during the Extension Review that the educator preparation programs at the University of Rhode Island are engaged in program improvement efforts in response to the recommendations from the previous visit and are making progress towards meeting the Rhode Island Program Approval Standards. As such, we will extend the approval for the Educator Preparation Programs at the University of Rhode Island for three years until 2015.

The following chart identifies several areas of progress towards meeting recommendations from the 2008 Rhode Island Program Approval visit and the Rhode Island Program Approval Standards.

For Initial Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased emphasis on performance as an educator in the assessment system• Strengthening the communication and advisement of the assessment system• Revisions to program curriculum to more closely align to program approval and professional standards• Additional opportunities for candidates to gain practical experience in field placements• Improved and expanded tracking systems to monitor and coordinate field placements
For the Reading Specialist/Consultant Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased curriculum emphasis on technology preparation and technology resource support• Strengthening the focus on diversity and meeting the needs of all learners in program curriculum• Expanding opportunities for program candidates to examine and explore leadership roles

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For the School Psychology Program

- Continued development of an assessment system aligned to program approval and professional standards
- Strengthening the communication and advisement of the assessment system
- Increased focus on data collection and analysis to guide program assessment and improvement
- Clarification of expectations for field placements and improved efforts to monitor field placements

During the 2010 Rhode Island Program Approval Interim visit, the School Psychology program was designated as being 'at risk of low performing' due to insufficient progress in meeting the Rhode Island Program Approval standards. The 2012 Extension Review team determined that since the Interim visit, the School Psychology Program has made progress in meeting these standards and removed this designation. The Extension Review team noted several areas for continued improvement for the program including: further development of acceptable performance levels within the assessment system, continued refinement to the practicum/internship evaluation instrument, and improved coordination in the selection process for field placements and supervisors prior to the selection of field placements.

We will notify member states of the extension of the approval of these programs for the purpose of interstate certification. Candidates who complete these programs will be eligible for certification in those states party to the Interstate Certification Compact. Should you have any questions concerning the Extension Review and Rhode Island Program Approval process, please contact Lisa M. Foehr (lisa.foehr@ride.ri.gov or 222-8809) in the Office of Educator Quality and Certification.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner