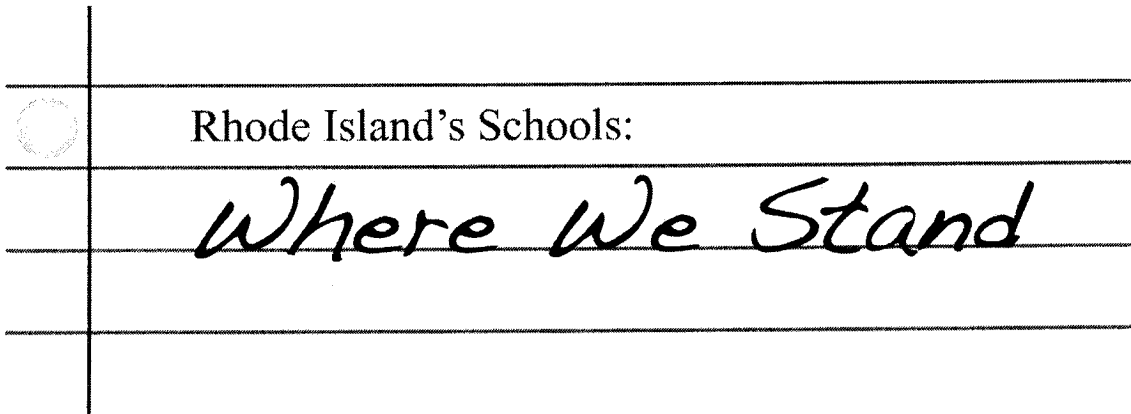




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Contact: Lucie M. Raposo Houle
Public Information Manager
401-222-3636, ext. 216
lhoule@RIpbs.org



Rhode Island PBS Production
Rhode Island's Schools: Where We Stand
Presents Local Perspective on Issues in National Documentary
Where We Stand: America's Schools in the 21st Century
on September 25 at 8 P.M.

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (September 11, 2008) – In 1995, America's college graduation rate was first in the world. Ten years later, it ranked 15th. As so many nations around the world continue to improve their systems of education, America can no longer afford to maintain the status quo. In an ever-changing, increasingly competitive global economy, is the United States doing all it can to prepare its students to win jobs and maintain a robust economy?

What about the state of education in our own state? With 39 cities and towns, and almost as many independent school districts, how do Rhode Island's trends in public education differ from national trends, and how are they the same? What's working, what isn't, and

- more -

why? What innovations are being considered to improve student retention and graduation rates? More important than raising numbers, what is being done to ensure that the quality of preparation adequately equips our children with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college and in the workplace?

These questions and more will be addressed in the WSBE Rhode Island PBS production, ***RHODE ISLAND'S SCHOOLS: WHERE WE STAND***. The 30-minute program, hosted by Paul Zangari, airs on Thursday, September 25 at 9 PM on WSBE Rhode Island PBS (channel 36, digital 36.1, RI cable 8, DirecTV36, Dish 7776), after broadcast of the national documentary, ***WHERE WE STAND: AMERICA'S SCHOOLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY*** at 8 PM.

Representing the spectrum of public education, panelists on ***RHODE ISLAND'S SCHOOLS: WHERE WE STAND*** will include Virginia Harnois, chairperson of the Smithfield (RI) School Committee and president-elect of the Rhode Island Association of School Committees; John L. Pini, executive director of the Rhode Island School Superintendants Association; John R. Golden, executive director of the Rhode Island Association of School Principals; Raymond J. Pouliot, vice president of the National Education Association Rhode Island.

On the national scene, *WHERE WE STAND: America's Schools in the 21st Century* presents a frank evaluation of our educational system's strengths and weaknesses. Hosted by Judy Woodruff, senior correspondent for *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, the documentary will visit schools throughout Ohio, an important swing state that represents a range of socioeconomic and geographic school districts. The program features schools in urban Cincinnati, suburban Columbus, and rural Belpre.

The documentary introduces students, parents, teachers, and administrators whose stories illustrate the overwhelming odds and shining successes of education in America. They

include Bin Che, an educator from mainland China who teaches Mandarin in rural Ohio; Cheresse Clark, principal of a high-poverty school struggling under the pressure of low test scores; and Guadalupe Medina, a student at a STEM school (which focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), who completed her high school requirements in two years.

Several nationally recognized education experts and leading proponents of educational reform put these examples in context. They include Geoffrey Canada, President of the Harlem Children's Zone; John Wilson, Executive Director of the National Education Association; Wendy Puriefoy, Director of Public Education Network; Chester Finn, President of the Fordham Institute; Rick Hess, Director of Education Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute; Michael Rebell, Executive Director of the Campaign for Educational Equity, Teachers College, Columbia University; and Sharon Lynn Kagan, Associate Dean for Policy, Teachers College at Columbia University.

WHERE WE STAND: America's Schools in the 21st Century is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and is a production of WLIW. Producer is Rebecca Haggerty. Ronald Thorpe is Executive Producer.

WSBE Rhode Island PBS is owned and operated by the Rhode Island Public Telecommunications Authority, a quasi-public agency of the State of Rhode Island. Rhode Island PBS is a viewer-supported member of the Public Broadcasting Service. Committed to lifelong learning, Rhode Island PBS has used the power of commercial-free media to educate, engage, enrich, inspire, and entertain viewers of all ages in Rhode Island, southeastern Massachusetts, and eastern Connecticut, for more than 40 years. For more information about the programs and education services at Rhode Island PBS, visit www.ripbs.org.

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