



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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**Enclosure 8c**  
**January 13, 2014**

Deborah A. Gist  
Commissioner

**TO:** Members of the RI Board of Education

**FROM:** Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

**RE:** Anchor Learning Academy – Request for Renewal

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## **Anchor Learning Academy Pilot Program Summary**

### **History**

#### **Authorizing Legislation**

The Rhode Island General Assembly passed H 6055 Sub A, *An Act Relating to Education – Recovery High Schools*, on June 30, 2011. This law was signed into law by Governor Chafee on July 13, 2011. This legislation resulted in the establishment of Anchor Learning Academy (ALA), Rhode Island’s Recovery High School.

#### **The authorizing legislation included the following:**

- Recovery High School is defined as one that serves “students diagnosed with substance use disorder or dependency...and...provides both comprehensive four (4) year high school education and a structured plan of recovery.”
- Authorized the Commissioner to create a “pilot recovery high school for the purposes of demonstrating the effectiveness of this model in Rhode Island.”
- Authorized currently licensed, eligible entities to submit proposals to operate the Recovery High School.
- Required the Recovery High School, at the conclusion of the first two academic years, to “submit an analysis demonstrating the educational outcomes, including but not limited to graduation rates, retention rates, course performance, and performance on the state assessment...”
- Defined the funds to be transferred from the student’s home/sending school district to the Recovery High School: “...the local share of education funding will be transferred to the recovery high school in the same manner as the local of education is paid to charter schools, the William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical High School, and the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center...”

## **RIDE and Board of Regents Action**

In response to the authorizing legislation, the Rhode Island Department of Education issued a request for proposals, soliciting eligible entities interested in operation a Recovery High School. The Providence Center was the only respondent. The Board of Regents approved the Providence Center operation of a recovery high school program for a two-year pilot period beginning with the 2012-2013 school year in March 2012.

## **The Recovery High School Model – Filling A Gap in the Education System**

### **Recovery High Schools: A National Model**

Recovery High Schools combine a rigorous and appropriate academic program with an array of recovery support services, allowing students to maintain sobriety and achieve academic success.

Recovery High Schools are a well-recognized and growing way to meet the needs of students looking to succeed in the classroom and in their recovery. There are currently 130 nationally recognized Recovery High Schools.

### **Adolescent Substance Use in Rhode Island**

The connection between substance use and poor school performance and “drop out” is clear. When removing all other factors, students who use drugs are 10% more likely to drop out of high school than peers who did not use drugs.

Rhode Island has the highest rate of alcohol use, marijuana use, and illicit drug use in the United States for people 12 and older:

- 34% of RI students drink alcohol
- 26% of RI students use marijuana
- 6% of RI students use cocaine
- 14% of RI students use other drugs

### **The Demand for a Recovery High School in Rhode Island**

Over the course of the 2012-13 school year, 45 students were referred to ALA, with a total of 17 students enrolled in year one and 14 students completing the school year. Two students were only enrolled for a month, while the remaining 15 were enrolled for more than 2 months, with an average length of stay equaling 6.3 months.

ALA’s referral numbers are high, reflective of the state’s high rates of substance abuse and of demand for this kind of educational environment. For comparison, in the first year of operation the three recovery high schools in Massachusetts (state population = 6.6m) received 50 referrals, only 5 more than ALA received in a state with less than one sixth the population.

The variance between referrals and enrollment is normal and can be attributed to several factors including reconsideration of student readiness and insufficient commitment after

learning of the demands of the ALA program. But these numbers do speak powerfully to the fact that Anchor Learning Academy is meeting a very real and truly significant need in Rhode Island.

## 2012 – 2013 School Year Outcomes

### 2012-2013 Program Performance

The following are the performance statistics called for in the authorizing legislation and in the board motion. These statistics are for the 2012-2013 School Year, the first full academic year for Anchor Learning Academy.

ALA will provide updated statistics as they become available and will provide data regarding the full second year of operation after the completion of the 2013-2014 School Year.

### 2012-2013 Graduation Rate

Students Successfully Completing Senior Year	2
Graduation Rate for Eligible Students	100%

Students Completing Junior Year, Returning to Home District for Graduation at End of Senior Year	2
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### 2012-2013 Retention Rates

Students Enrolled	17
Students Completing Year	13
Full Year Retention Rate	76.47%
Avg Stay for +1 Month Students	6.3 months

*Note: Two students were enrolled for only one month. The remaining 15 were all enrolled for more than two months.*

### 2012-2013 Course Performance

*(For students attending ALA +1 month)*

Pre-ALA Credit-Bearing Course Failure Rate	6 per student <i>(Includes Ds and Fs)</i>
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ALA Credit-Bearing Course Failure Rate	0 F Grades <i>(Student required to retake full course.)</i> 3 D Grades <i>(Student can fulfill with Summer School or Credit Recovery)</i>
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Total Credits Earned	73 <i>(Out of 76 Possible)</i>
Students Recovering Credits	8
Average Credit Recovery Rate	+4 per student

### Grade Distribution in Credit-Bearing Class

Total A Grades Earned	21
Total B Grades Earned	28
Total C Grades Earned	24
Total D Grades Earned	3
Total F Grades Earned	<u>0</u>
	76

Pre-ALA Avg Attendance Rate	33%
ALA Attendance Rate	87%
Increase in Attendance Rate	263%

### 2012-2013 Performance on the State Assessment

Students Taking Spring Science NECAP	5
Students Scoring Partially Proficient	3
Students Scoring Substantially Below Proficient	2

**RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Education approves to extend the term of Anchor Learning Academy for two (2) additional years, authorizing them as a Recovery High School Program until June 2016 under their current operating terms, as presented.**