

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release

Contact: Patricia Hines, Executive Director, RIASP
272-9811, ext. 18 phines@riasp.org

Gail Barravecchia-Dandurand Named Rhode Island Outstanding First Year Principal

March 18, 2010 - The Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Association of School Principals has named Gail Barravecchia-Dandurand, Principal of Narragansett Elementary School, as its 2008-2009 Outstanding First Year Principal.

Having earned a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Special Education from Salve Regina University, a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Rhode Island, and a Master of Educational Administration Degree from Rhode Island College, Mrs. Dandurand has been a Rhode Island educator for twenty years. She taught in the Chariho School District from 1989 to 2006 before coming to Narragansett Elementary School as assistant principal for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years.

As Narragansett Schools Superintendent Katherine Sipala attests, Mrs. Dandurand's "success as a first year principal has much to do with her organizational skills, her persistence, her commitment to detail and follow through. She is a skilled manager who brings the systems of the school together to advance a safe and well run facility." "She also keenly values the nurturing and development of school culture. She has a remarkable ability to support school reform with the implementation of new strategies as she connects theory to practice and policies to achieve sustainability."

In just her first year as principal, Mrs. Dandurand oversaw a major school building renovation project, led her school community in developing common writing and math assessments, worked with her faculty to develop "Power Standards," implemented a pilot Foreign Language program, and led the school in collaborating with the Feinstein Foundation on a charitable service project for students. To her credit as an educational leader, there are structures in place including data days, monthly grade level Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings, intervention blocks, and a system to ensure student progress is constantly monitored. In particular, her collaborative work with teachers and staff has led to a data driven RTI process in the school which has received recognition for Narragansett Elementary School as a model for RTI in the state.

Faculty and staff at Narragansett Elementary School feel valued by Mrs. Dandurand. Teachers, parents, staff, and other administrators all describe her as upbeat, positive, supportive, and focused on students. Mrs. Dandurand is highly regarded, considered very approachable, and known for being action oriented. Maintaining high expectations for all, Mrs. Dandurand listens to faculty, staff, students, and parents and makes decisions based on what is best for children. As one teacher noted, "she inspires people to step up and rise to their full potential."

Most specifically, Mrs. Dandurand's work in creating a very productive professional learning community in the school and working collaboratively with others in developing an effective RTI process for the school set her apart as an Outstanding First Year Principal. The Rhode Island Association of School Principals is proud to recognize Gail Dandurand as its 2008-2009 Outstanding First Year Principal. Mrs. Dandurand resides in Hope Valley, Rhode Island.