



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE; February 24, 2015

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## **ACHIEVEMENT FIRST TO OPEN A SECOND RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL**

*Achievement First Iluminar Mayoral Academy Will Serve Students from Providence, North Providence, Cranston and Warwick*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Achievement First (AF) is proud to announce that its second Rhode Island elementary school — Achievement First Iluminar Mayoral Academy — will open its doors in August 2015.

Achievement First Iluminar Mayoral Academy (AF Iluminar) will begin with kindergarten and first-grade students in August (approximately 180 students), and add a grade each year until it serves grades K-4 (approximately 450 students). AF's first Rhode Island school, Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy, opened in August 2013 and has received approximately seven lottery applicants for every open seat in each of the past two lotteries.

"We are excited to open Achievement First Iluminar Mayoral Academy to meet parents' growing demand for another high-quality public school option in Providence," said Dacia Toll, co-CEO and president of Achievement First. "With this new school, we look forward to providing more Rhode Island families with the opportunity for a great education that puts students on the path to success in college, career and life."

Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza said, "I congratulate Achievement First on its launch of Iluminar Academy. This new Mayoral Academy represents a major step toward completing the vision laid out in Achievement First's charter; it is an exciting new opportunity for Providence's children and our community. "

The name "Iluminar" is Spanish in origin, and means "to illuminate" or "to enlighten." The name reflects the goal and commitment of the school to build a school community around enlightenment and the joy of learning. In addition, the majority of students in both Achievement First's current Rhode Island school and in Providence Public Schools are Latino.

With regard to academics, Achievement First Iluminar Mayoral Academy will be based on a similar instructional model to Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy — a school that, in its first year, achieved 99% student attendance and helped first-graders read, on average, at a second-grade level.

"Sending my son to Achievement First is the best thing I have done for him," said Yaneli Arias, a parent of an Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy student. "I believe that education is the biggest gift a parent can give to their child. I have so many friends who are



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trying to get into Achievement First, and Achievement First Illuminar Mayoral Academy will give so many more parents the opportunity they want for their children.”

Achievement First Illuminar Mayoral Academy is planned to be temporarily co-located with Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy at 370 Hartford Avenue in Providence. This co-location will last for approximately two years while a permanent building and location is identified for Achievement First Illuminar Mayoral Academy.

Mike Magee, CEO of Rhode Island Mayoral Academies (RIMA), said, “Achievement First has been an excellent addition to the Rhode Island education landscape and we are thrilled that many more students and families will benefit from the opening of another high-performing, free public charter school—Achievement First Illuminar Mayoral Academy.”

Both Achievement First Illuminar Mayoral Academy and Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy are currently accepting students for 2015-16. All students are admitted by blind lottery, and these schools require no admissions tests or fees. To enter the lottery for an Achievement First school, families can visit [achievementfirst.org/enroll](http://achievementfirst.org/enroll) or visit the school at 370 Hartford Avenue (Providence) to fill out a lottery enrollment form. Parents can also call 401-347-1106 ext. 30601 or email [admissionsRI@achievementfirst.org](mailto:admissionsRI@achievementfirst.org). The lottery deadline is February 28. Parents can also submit enrollment forms after that date and may be added to the waitlist.

*To learn more contact Amanda Pinto at [amandapinto@achievementfirst.org](mailto:amandapinto@achievementfirst.org) or 203-726-0168.*

### **About Achievement First**

Achievement First is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that currently operates 29 public charter schools in Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York. The mission of Achievement First is to close the achievement gap and deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of race, economic status or zip code. With its college-preparatory focus, Achievement First schools are attaining breakthrough academic gains and 100% of its high school graduates are accepted into colleges and universities. During the 2014-15 academic year, more than 9,500 students in historically low-performing and underserved communities are attending Achievement First schools. For more information, visit [www.AchievementFirst.org](http://www.AchievementFirst.org).

### **About Rhode Island Mayoral Academies**

Rhode Island Mayoral Academies (RIMA) is a non-profit organization that supports the statewide growth of mayoral academies: high-performing, diverse, independent public schools governed by mayor-led school boards. RIMA works towards its mission by recruiting extraordinary school operators and leaders to open mayoral academies; supporting mayoral academies from the application stage through the first years of growth; and cultivating mayors across Rhode Island to become leaders in improving public education. For more information, visit [www.mayoralacademies.org](http://www.mayoralacademies.org)



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