

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2003

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Public Education Network, Providence Leadership Meet to Strengthen Partnership between Public Schools and Community Organizations

Providence, RI – Public Education Network, a leading national advocate for public school reform, today are meeting with Providence Mayor David N. Cicilline before an audience of hundreds to discuss how the city's public schools and community organizations could work together to improve the academic and social services available to students of Olneyville, one of the oldest and poorest sections of Providence, R.I. Co-hosting the event is Public Education Fund (PEF), a local education fund and member of Public Education Network (PEN) that works directly with communities across the country to improve the quality of public education.

Providence is one of five communities in the country engaged in PEN's Schools and Community Initiative, a multi-million dollar effort to better coordinate and align the programs and services of numerous community organizations with schools and with each other to make services more available and accessible to students, their families and the community. In just over three years, PEN has provided these communities nearly \$525,000 each to better integrate social services for children available via community-based programs and academic services available in public schools.

"Public engagement is at the heart of our work in Providence and across the country," said Wendy Puriefoy, president of PEN. "From planning to implementation to evaluation, we engage members of the community in every aspect of the Schools and Community Initiative. The public's support and active involvement is vital to our success. We are heartened by the strong response of the Mayor and the community in Providence and look forward to a partnership that will engage the community to ensure every child has the opportunity to receive a quality public education."

The public forum with Mayor Cicilline is the culmination of a daylong workshop hosted by PEN, PEF and a number of other education leaders who traveled to Providence to build on the successes that PEF has already achieved.

"Without the support of the community and its leaders, we cannot improve the quality of the public education that our children receive," said Margie Edwards, executive director of PEF. "We commend Mayor Cicilline for his participation today and for his continuing support and advocacy on behalf of our public schools, students and families."

In addition to PEF, local education funds in Buffalo, N.Y., Lancaster, Pa., Paterson, N.J., and Lincoln, Neb., participate in the nationwide Schools and Community Initiative.

About Public Education Network

For over a decade, Public Education Network has been working to make quality education a reality for every child. Advocating for and actively working toward public school reform at the national level, PEN also supports a network of 78 local education funds (LEFs) that work on the ground with communities across the country to improve the quality of public schools district by district. Through its LEFs, PEN serves more than 10.6 million students in 30 states and the District of Columbia. Operating with the belief that greater public responsibility leads to greater reform, PEN is unique in that it focuses on engaging every member of the community to advance public school reform.

About Public Education Fund

The Public Education Fund (PEF) was founded in 1986 as a non-profit community-based organization. The mission of the PEF is to lead the Providence community in a commitment to our children's academic achievement and personal development.

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