

*The Declaration of Education
Cumberland, Rhode Island*

The people of Cumberland have demonstrated a passion for the overall improvement and development of all its residents' learning potential.

We recognize education as the best pathway to securing our future prosperity and vitality at a time when our nation and state face extraordinary economic challenges.

We recognize that an important building block in the foundation of Cumberland's future is laid every day in its schools and other educational organizations.

We recognize the fundamental right to a quality education. With this right comes a responsibility to support a renewed civic commitment to excellent, community-based education by maximizing all local, state and national resources available.

We imagine Cumberland as a place that is known for innovative and creative people who are contributing in a variety of ways, great and small, to the success of all Cumberland students. And we want to be universally recognized as a great place to live.

We acknowledge that over the past generation Rhode Island lagged behind the rest of the nation as the nation itself lost its competitive educational advantage over the rest of the world. During this time Cumberland lost its place as a top school district in the state.

However, over the past several years, Cumberland has made transformational changes to the way it delivers public education to its citizens. Today, due to innovations in municipal government that have put Cumberland in the national spotlight, Cumberland families have more quality public school options than ever before, diverse and affordable after-school learning programs, and opportunities for the town's youth to have a meaningful role on civic life through the Cumberland Youth Commission.

The Cumberland Public School District has displayed a renewed commitment to best practices such as expanded instructional time, more effective outcomes-based assessment and higher expectations for student achievement. This commitment is embodied by concrete new initiatives being proposed and implemented by district leadership which include full-day kindergarten, an After School Proficiency Center (ASPC), "Saturday School" for high school students needing additional support, a more progressive district grading policy, and a Comprehensive Assessment System that provides real-time feedback on student educational progress.

On November 4, 2010, Cumberland voters passed a referendum encouraging municipal and school governing bodies to collaborate more thoroughly and purposefully for the betterment of all Cumberland students, families and taxpayers. We acknowledge and support this directive.

These changes, if nurtured and built upon, can dramatically improve educational outcomes and quality of life for Cumberland residents.

Therefore, let it be known:

We, the people of Cumberland, Rhode Island, do hereby make this Declaration of Education as a sign of our ongoing daily pledge not only to our students and their parents but also to Cumberland as a whole because when a community creates opportunities in education, quality of life is enhanced for the entire community.

We commit to recapture Cumberland's place among the very best public education systems in Rhode Island. We further commit to ensuring that our students are competitive with students across New England, the nation and the world. We will honor this commitment by establishing the Town of Cumberland as a community focused on the value of an excellent education.

We do hereby sign this Declaration of Education stating that we will work together to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration and increased awareness of learning opportunities for all community members who live in the Town of Cumberland.

We the undersigned do hereby ordain and establish this Declaration of Education, on Tuesday, January 31, 2012.