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NEWS RELEASE

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Warwick Arts Teacher Named 2007 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year

WARWICK – Governor Donald L. Carcieri announced today (Dec. 12th, 2006) that Catherine Davis Hayes, a visual-arts teacher at the Oakland Beach Elementary Schools, has been named the 2007 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Hayes, who has been teaching at Oakland Beach for 11 years, was instrumental in transforming Oakland Beach into a SmART School – a school in which all teachers receive extra training and support so as to place the arts at the center of the curriculum for all subjects taught in the school.

“I am very pleased to announce that Cathy Hayes is Rhode Island’s teacher of the year,” Governor Carcieri said. “Cathy’s energy and dedication to the arts and to her students has earned her this important distinction. She believes in the power of the arts to help students make connections between ideas from throughout all their areas of study. Rhode Island is very fortunate to have teachers of Cathy’s experience, ability, and commitment.”

“I would like to congratulate Cathy Hayes today on this high honor,” said James. A. DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “Under the Regents’ new Diploma System, all graduating seniors must demonstrate proficiency in the arts. Her work in the arts will prepare all her students to lead fulfilling lives.”

“Cathy Hayes is known for her teamwork and collaboration with her colleagues,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “She also encourages teamwork and creativity among her students, which has made her an outstanding teacher and an inspiring example to all who work with her.”

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Ms. Hayes has been teaching in the Young Artist Program there for 13 years.

Ms. Hayes, formerly a commercial artist, discovered her interest in arts education when she served as a volunteer at the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. She returned to school for a master’s degree in teaching at Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She then returned to the School for the Deaf, and later began work at Oakland Beach.

A National Board Certified teacher, she was honored with the Humanitarian Award by the Rhode Island Business Volunteers for the Arts for her work at Hasbro Children’s Hospital.

“I believe it is our responsibility as teachers to cultivate lifelong learners who have strong creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and reflective skills,” Ms. Hayes wrote in her application for Teacher of the Year. “My art curriculum fosters these skills through encouraging open-ended answers to design problems.”

As the state Teacher of the Year, Ms. Hayes becomes a candidate to be the 2007 National Teacher of the Year, who will be selected in the spring.