

**FLAKE FEST**

Snow ending early today with gradual clearing this afternoon; cold tonight.  
Forecast, E12

# The Providence Journal

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WEDNESDAY  
JANUARY 31, 2007

50¢  
\$2.40 per week by carrier

2006 New England Newspaper of the Year

## R.I. students improving in math, English

Scores improve in all parts of the state, from cities to suburbs, and among various groups of students, including minorities, English-language learners and youngsters living in poverty.

BY JENNIFER D. JORDAN  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — This year's test scores bring welcome news: elementary and middle school students across Rhode Island are improving in reading and math — gains that officials attribute to major changes in education in the past few years.

Statewide, 62 percent of elementary and middle school students scored proficient in reading, an increase of 4 percentage points from the 2005-'06 school year, and 53 percent were proficient in math, an increase of 3 percentage points. About 69,000 students in grades 3 through 8 took the tests, called the New England Common Assessment Program, in October.

Education officials said the scores were encouraging and reflect the dividends of years of change. These include establish-

ing clear standards for each grade level, creating new tests that evaluate whether students are meeting those standards, and providing more professional development for teachers, particularly in reading, to help their students meet rigorous goals.

"The news is very positive and is an indication we are moving on the right track," said Governor Carcieri, who released the scores with education officials yesterday at the State House. "While the absolute proficiencies are below where they need to be, we are making progress. There is nothing more important we can do than to raise our youngsters' level of achievement."

Under the federal education law No Child Left Behind, all students must be proficient in English and math by 2014.

SEE TESTS, A7

## Student suspect asks to be allowed to leave voluntarily

But the prosecutor argues that the Indian national — whose behavior caught the eye of federal authorities — should be deported because of his "evasiveness in this country and his lies."

BY KAREN LEE ZINER  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

BOSTON — Mohammed Yusuf Mullawala, whose behavior at a Smithfield trucking school spawned a nationwide antiterrorism investigation, yesterday testified that he lied to state police who arrested him last month, as well as on applications for permanent residency, colleges, licenses and the trucking school.

But during nearly two hours on the stand at the federal immigration court, Mullawala professed that he is an innocent student who is deserving of voluntary departure to his home in In-

dia, a departure that would potentially allow his return to this country.

"I did mistakes. But I'm not a criminal. I've not done any harm to this country," said Mullawala. "I beg to the court, I have not done any crimes. I did give false information for some, but I'm not criminal. I'm an innocent student."

Judge Matthew J. D'Angelo said he will issue a decision on or before Feb. 13 on whether Mullawala should be granted his request for voluntary departure.

SEE SUSPECT, A4

## Reporter testifies Libby divulged agent's identity

Former New York Times reporter Judith Miller, who spent 85 days in jail trying to avoid disclosing the identity of her source, takes the stand for the prosecution.

BY CAROL D. LEONNIG  
and AMY GOLDSTEIN  
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Former New York Times reporter Judith Miller yesterday helped the prosecutor who landed her in jail and forced her into the witness chair, providing potentially damaging information about the confidential administration source she tried to shield, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

Deliberately and sometimes defensively offering her account in Libby's perjury trial, Miller told the jury that "a very irritated and angry" Libby told her in a confidential conversation on June 23, 2003, that a prominent war critic's wife worked at the CIA. Libby told investigators that he believed he first learned that information from another journalist nearly three weeks later — the assertion at the core of the charges against him.

Miller testified that Libby, then Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, shared this information as they talked alone in his of-

SEE LIBBY, A7

### STATE OF THE STATE



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / CONNIE GROSCH

Governor Carcieri pauses outside the House chamber as he's introduced for his State of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly. At left is Sen. Leo Blais, R-Coventry; at right, House Minority Leader Robert Watson, R-East Greenwich.

## SETTING THE AGENDA

Energy, the environment and education are among the major initiatives Governor Carcieri offers in his address before the General Assembly.

BY ELIZABETH GUDRAIS,  
KATHERINE GREGG  
and SCOTT MAYEROWITZ  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — In his fifth State of the State address, Governor Carcieri last night painted a picture of a Rhode Island that has "honest, ethical and open" government, is "seen as a center of finance" and also as a "national leader in high-quality, affordable health care."

As he sees Rhode Island today, the median \$61,000 family income is 11th highest in the nation and the state is making great strides in education, as measured by standardized test scores, especially in urban districts.

On the day before he unveils his budget proposal to lawmakers, Carcieri took the occasion to sketch some of his big-picture ideas, in-

cluding the creation of a Rhode Island Power Authority to marshal, manage and sell low-cost energy from newly developed sources, such as wind and hydropower, and an \$85-million bond question next year to pay for cleanup efforts in Narragansett Bay — the largest environmental bond in state history. Carcieri also proposed a \$70-million "highway investment plan" to repair roads and bridges. He did not spell out how he proposes to pay for his proposals. For instance, he said the road and bridge repairs will be completed using "a onetime source of funds that can only be used for capital projects." But he will have to offer details soon enough: He was scheduled to present his budget to the General Assembly this after-

SEE ADDRESS, A7

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Create a Rhode Island Power Authority to manage and sell new low-cost wind energy and hydropower.
- Use one-time revenues to launch a \$70-million "highway investment plan," and bonds to finance \$85 million in continued Narragansett Bay cleanup efforts.
- Spend \$46 million more on schools while collaborating with House speaker and Senate president on a "21st Century Education Plan" focused on education financing, teacher quality and "urban challenges."
- Sign onto the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
- Have a single statewide body oversee water supplies, and "begin to responsibly tap" the Big River Reservoir area.

## Celona, ex-hospital leaders to face judge

Meanwhile, CVS executives plead innocent to bribery and conspiracy charges in the hiring of ex-Sen. John Celona.

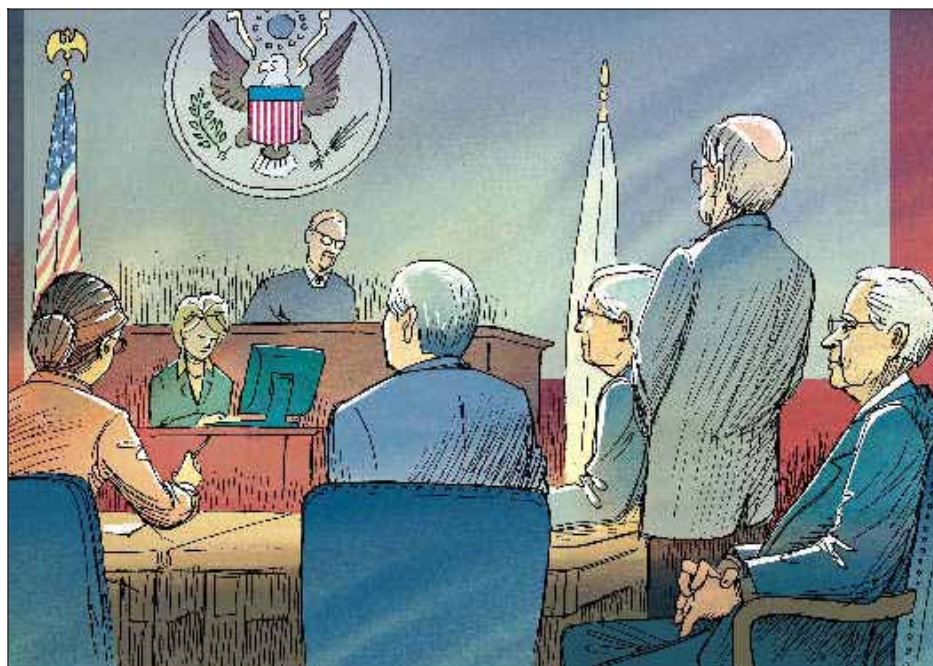
BY MIKE STANTON  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

The wages of corruption come due today for John A. Celona and two of the longtime senator's confederates, former Roger Williams Medical Center executives Robert A. Urciuoli and Frances P. Driscoll.

Celona, the backslapping North Providence pol who rose from the Model Legislature in high school to powerful State House leader, faces 1½ to 3 years in prison when he is sentenced for selling his public office for personal gain.

Urciuoli, the high-flying hospital president who dined in elegant restaurants and jetted to fancy resorts, faces 6½ to 8 years in prison for putting Celona on the payroll to do the hospital's political bidding.

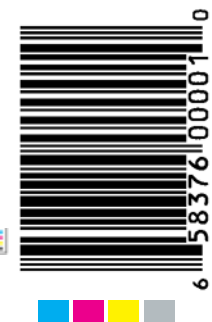
Driscoll, the onetime public relations executive whose supporters extol her charitable works, faces considerably less time, since she



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / TOM MURPHY

CVS executives John R. Kramer, far right, and Carlos Ortiz, standing, are arraigned in U.S. District Court yesterday before Judge David L. Martin.

SEE CELONA, B6



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C M Y K

### THE VOTE ON IRAQ

The Bush administration's allies in the Senate launch an effort to prevent passage of any resolution opposing the president's effort to push more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. **A4**

### THE PEOPLE WHO BUILT STONEHENGE



New excavations near Stonehenge uncover what archaeologists say was probably the village of workers who erected the monoliths in England 4,600 years ago. **A2**

### WHERE MORE IS LESS

A new report by The Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College examines why a two-parent family of four with a pretax household income of \$50,000 a year is worse off than a similar family that earned only \$45,000. **G1**