

Transforming Education in Rhode Island

Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Donald L. Carcieri, Governor



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**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner



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Dear Fellow Rhode Islanders,

Thank you for taking the time to read and understand our strategic plan, *Transforming Education in Rhode Island*. This plan represents our best attempt to state our goals and priorities, to describe the strategies we will put in place to reach our goals, and to propose some objective measures to monitor our progress.

Our strategic plan is meant to be a living document that will help us set goals and establish a direction for our work over the next five years. We will be flexible and willing to adapt this plan to meet changing needs, but it will be our guiding document. We expect you to hold us accountable for moving toward its objectives.

This plan is also a vision statement, articulating our hopes and best predictions of where we need to be in three to five years and what we need to do to get there. We have set goals that are really ambitious, but they are achievable.

Our major goal, the primary objective that we are all working toward, is to ensure that all Rhode Island students are ready for success in college, careers, and life. We propose that, by 2015, at least 85 percent of all Rhode Island students will graduate with a Regents diploma, which will signify that they have demonstrated proficiency in their core academic subjects and that they are ready to succeed in postsecondary education and in a challenging career.


I want to emphasize to all Rhode Islanders the sense of urgency we feel about the importance of our work. We have a strong foundation in place, and we are building upon it. We are not changing direction, but we are certainly getting more specific and ambitious about our goals. Over the next five years, we will direct all of our resources to focus squarely on these priorities.

Many Rhode Islanders contributed their ideas and their time to help us develop this strategic plan. As we put this plan into action, I will continue to seek advice from the public, through the feedback form on our website (www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner), through community forums, at school visits, and at other public meetings. I sincerely thank you for your input and support, and I call upon all Rhode Islanders to join me as we work together to advance learning for all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gist", written in a cursive style.

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner



"If America is going to lead the world in the 21st century, America's schools must lead the world. And Rhode Island's schools can and will be a leader among them. And that responsibility for creating the world's best schools lies squarely on our shoulders." Remarks of Commissioner Gist upon her appointment, State House, April 2, 2009

Development and Intent of the Strategic Plan

Since her appointment in April 2009, and taking the position on July 1, 2009, Commissioner Deborah A. Gist has established a vision of what Rhode Island schools can and will look like in the future. That vision and accompanying beliefs depicted on pages 5 and 6 guided the development of this strategic plan. *Transforming Education in Rhode Island* has been developed with extensive input from the Board of Regents, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) staff, educators, parents, community members, civic leaders, and youth. After setting the five priorities with the Board of Regents, the Commissioner and her staff developed key objectives, impact statements and measures, and strategies for each priority area that are based on current research, state education policy, and national direction.

Initial drafts of the strategic plan were shared with multiple stakeholders, placed on the RIDE website, and extensively reviewed by the Board of Regents, outside experts, and Rhode Island citizens. As part of her 100-Day Entry Plan, Commissioner Gist visited every district, state school, and charter school in Rhode Island, met with parents, students, teachers, administrators, and civic leaders, and gathered more input on ways to improve the strategic plan. All the feedback gathered was used to revise the draft, and on January 7, 2010, the Board of Regents approved *Transforming Education in Rhode Island*.

This plan was designed to articulate what RIDE is responsible for in leading education within the state. The role of the state has been articulated in the Basic Education Program, and the objectives and strategies contained within this plan are based on those specific responsibilities and roles. The time-frame for realizing the goals, objectives, and measures described in the plan is 2010 through 2015.

This plan represents our best attempt to state our goals and priorities, articulate the strategies that will meet our objectives, and establish impact measures to monitor our progress. It is a living document that will be reviewed and adapted as change is needed. The plan serves as RIDE's roadmap to fulfilling the vision of transforming education in Rhode Island. We will hold ourselves accountable for getting results.

Fulfilling the vision expressed in this plan is not easy. Yet, we are responsible for making it happen. We will need all Rhode Islanders to work together and to do even more to support the future of our children, the health of our communities, and the success and economic sustainability of our state.



Role of the State in Leading Education

The mission of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education is to lead and support schools and communities in ensuring that all students achieve at the high levels needed to lead fulfilling and productive lives, to succeed in academic and employment settings, and to contribute to society. In fulfilling its mission, the Board of Regents has articulated and established its expectations for a statewide education system. These expectations and requirements are contained in the Basic Education Program Regulations, which were passed by the Board of Regents on June 4, 2009, and will go into effect on July 1, 2010.

The Board of Regents believes that an aligned and cohesive education system is required in order to ensure that all Rhode Island students are adequately prepared for life beyond secondary education. The aligned and cohesive education system must focus on student achievement and student mastery of the skills needed to succeed as lifelong learners, workers, and citizens. To accomplish the delivery of a sound, high-quality education to every student, the school, Local Education Agency (LEA), and state must ensure that policies, programs, and systems are connected and directed toward the common purpose of improving achievement for all students. [BEP regulations, Title G-12-2.2]

The Board of Regents acknowledges that implementing an aligned, cohesive system requires a long-term investment in building the capacity of individuals, institutions, and education communities to develop the knowledge, skills, and resources for effecting sustainable improvement. At every level of the education system, four capacities are needed: focused, visionary, accountable leadership; active, responsive, dynamic personnel supports; organized, accessible, transparent infrastructure; and high-quality, rigorous, and authentic content. [BEP regulations, Title G-12-2.3]

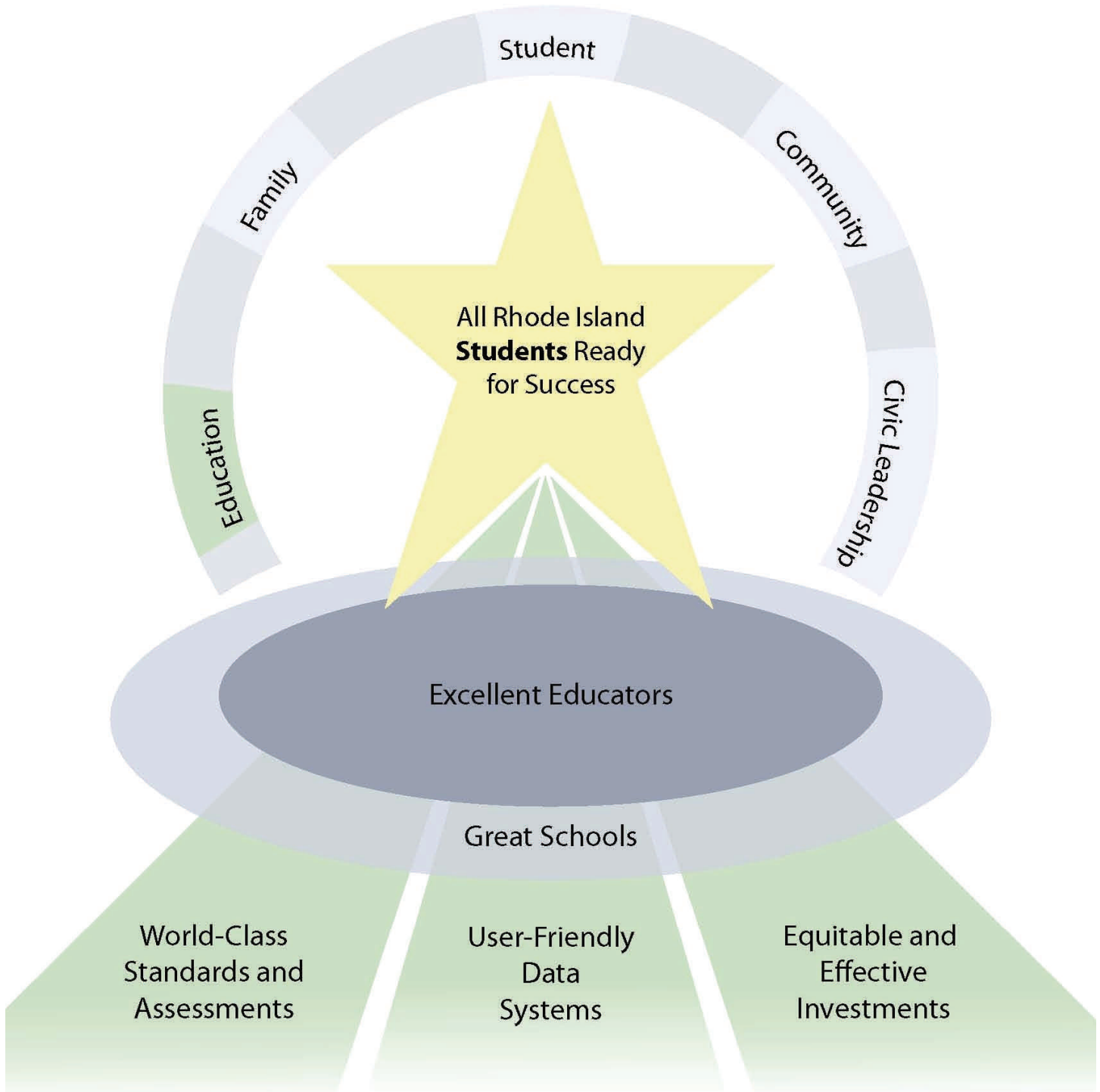
Within the Basic Education Program, the Board of Regents has established expectations for RIDE. The primary responsibility of RIDE is to ensure the full implementation of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Education Strategy by developing and implementing a standards-based approach for each element of the Basic Education Program. It is the responsibility of RIDE to develop relevant standards for adoption by the Board of Regents, to develop and maintain systems to accurately measure compliance with standards, to develop statewide operational systems to reduce costs and burdens at the local level, to work with each LEA to improve performance at the local level, and to ensure that the LEA is effective in support of its schools. [BEP regulations, G-12-3]

The Commissioner and RIDE staff fulfill their leadership role by carrying out the following functions:

- Establishing clear expectations for systems, educators, and students;
- Providing systems with the capacity and resources to enable LEAs to meet state expectations;
- Ensuring quality assurance and quality control of LEA efforts through an effective system of indicators, data collection, analysis, and public reporting; and
- Leveraging innovative partnerships to ensure fidelity of implementation and to overcome barriers to improvement.

In carrying out its leadership role, RIDE has a responsibility to exercise its authority under state and federal law to intervene in LEAs and schools that are not closing student achievement gaps, are not continuously improving, or are not reaching state performance standards. [BEP regulations, G-12-3.2]

Transforming Education in Rhode Island



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Transforming RI Education: Our Five Priorities

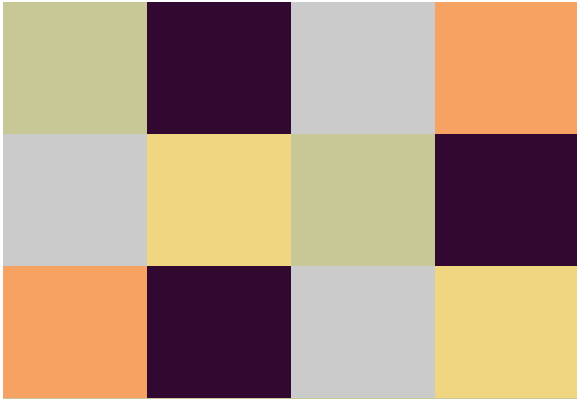
All Rhode Island Students Ready for Success in College, Careers, and Life

- ★ **Ensure Educator Excellence**
Every student must have highly effective teachers.
Every school must have a highly effective leader.
We must support educators throughout their careers.
- ★ **Accelerate All Schools Toward Greatness***
Rhode Island must not allow failing schools to exist.
Leadership must be responsible for quality improvement.
Communities must commit to supporting high-quality schools.
- ★ **Establish World-Class Standards and Assessments**
Standards must be clear, high, and internationally benchmarked.
We must hold all educators and students to high expectations.
We must hold schools accountable for student achievement.
- ★ **Develop User-Friendly Data Systems**
Everyone must have access to usable data.
Data must be relevant, timely, and practical.
Data systems must drive continuous improvement.
- ★ **Invest our resources wisely**
Financing must be adequate, effective, and equitable.
We must use incentives to promote efficiencies and effectiveness.
We must be capable stewards of the taxpayers' investment.

*Schools include all learning environments.



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Transforming Education in Rhode Island depicts how RIDE carries out its responsibilities and roles. All of the objectives and strategies listed for each priority area are aimed at achieving our primary goal:

All Rhode Island Students Ready for Success in College, Careers, and Life



*By **2012 80%** of all Rhode Island students will graduate with a Regents-approved high school diploma or its equivalent ready for entry into college or post-secondary education and training programs.*

*By **2015 85%** of all Rhode Island students will graduate with a Regents-approved high school diploma or its equivalent ready for entry into college or post-secondary education and training programs.*

The priorities and objectives presented on page 8 provide a quick overview of the contents of this plan.

Priorities and Strategies at a Glance

Ensure Educator Excellence

EE1 Improve Rigor of Preparation Programs	1.1 Strengthen Standards
	1.2 Create Innovative Options
EE2 Support Districts on Effective Human Resources	2.1 Model HR Systems
	2.2 Evaluation Systems
EE3 Align Growth and Advancement to Student Achievement	3.1 Revise Licensure Renewal
	3.2 Professional Development

Accelerate All Schools Toward Greatness

AS1 Accelerate Achievement	1.1 Early Learning
	1.2 Close Gaps
	1.3 System of Supports
AS2 Transform Identified Schools	2.1 Model Options Developed
	2.2 Leadership Development
AS3 Create Multiple Pathways to Colleges and Careers	3.1 Diversify Pathways
	3.2 Technical Assistance on
	3.3 Strategic Partnerships
	3.4 Evaluate Efficiencies

Establish World-Class Standards and Assessments

WCS1 Adopt World-Class Standards	1.1 Common Core Standards
	1.2 Rigorous Curricula
	1.3 Support Programs
WCS2 Implement High-Quality State Assessments	2.1 Review NECAP
	2.2 Review International Assessments
WCS3 Monitor Local Assessments	3.1 Logistical Support on Formative Assessments
	3.2 Identify Models

Develop User-Friendly Data Systems

DS1 Improve Data Accessibility	1.1 Create Tools
	1.2 Engage Public
DS2 Design Infrastructure Supports	2.1 Integrated Data Structure
	2.2 Processes for Ownership
DS3 Strengthen Informed Decision-Making	3.1 Create Tools
	3.2 Support to LEAs
DS4 Redesign Accountability Systems	4.1 Improve Processes
	4.2 Develop Metrics

Invest Our Resources Wisely

IRW1 Promote Adequate, Equitable Funding	1.1 Develop Funding Formula
	1.2 Improve Statewide Systems
	1.3 Seek Funding
IRW2 Appropriate Investments	2.1 Create Tools and Processes for Efficiencies
	2.2 Evaluate Effectiveness
IRW3 Responsive School Budgets	3.1 Standardized Budgets
	3.2 Identify Effective Practices

Ensure Educator Excellence



Goal: All educators will be effective and committed to accelerating student performance.

Impact Statements:

By 2012 75% of educators will be evaluated using a rigorous performance evaluation that includes student achievement data.

By 2015 all students will be supported by educators who demonstrate effective performance.

We know that the single most important factor in the successful education of our students is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher. Every student must have excellent teachers throughout his or her educational experience. Every teacher must work in a school where the principal is a highly effective instructional leader. We also know that ensuring educator excellence requires thorough preparation, ongoing professional development, a high-quality system of supports, and candid and instructive feedback about performance. We are committed to developing a comprehensive system to ensure that we have excellent educators in every school and every classroom. Creating a comprehensive, robust system of educator development and support will require strong partnerships with institutes of higher education, professional organizations, labor unions, and the practitioners within our schools. The objectives and strategies identified on the following pages are our key actions for ensuring educator excellence in Rhode Island.

Objective EE1: Improve the quality and rigor of all educator preparation programs.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 100% of educator candidates will pass a set of rigorous, state-approved assessments for licensure.

By 2015 100% of preparation program renewals will include strong linkages to program graduates' effectiveness, including student achievement.

Strategy EE1.1 Review and strengthen rigorous standards and criteria for approval of educator preparation programs.

- Increase minimum scores on basic skills testing requirements for candidates.
- Establish rigorous protocols for the recruitment and interview of preparation program candidates.
- Establish objective requirements for teaching performance in order to exit any educator preparation program.
- Revise Rhode Island Program Approval Standards to include measures of effectiveness of program completers.

Strategy EE1.2 Create innovative options and supports for individuals with diverse backgrounds to demonstrate proficiency and enter the profession.

- Expand the variety of pathways into the profession by attracting high-quality, non-college-based programs for all educators.
- Require all programs to fully implement and monitor proven strategies for the recruitment of diverse individuals into the profession.
- Remove barriers to the recruitment of a diverse candidate pool for all educators.
- Establish rigorous non-degree leadership development options.

Objective EE2: Support all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in their implementation and management of effective human resource systems that continuously improve student achievement and support performance-based compensation models.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 100% of LEAs will have an approved rigorous, performance-based evaluation system tied to measures of educator effectiveness and student achievement data that meets state standards.

By 2015 100% of LEAs will have generated two years of performance data for all educators and will be able to demonstrate data-driven decisions around hiring, assignment, advancement, evaluation, and termination.

Strategy EE2.1 Develop models of effective human resource systems.

- Create explicit standards for the capacity needed to implement a human capital system compliant with the Basic Education Program.
- Establish a system of technical assistance, guidance, and supports for implementing criterion-based recruitment, hiring, and assignment strategies.

Strategy EE2.2 Provide models of effective performance-based evaluation systems and rubrics for measuring the effectiveness of existing performance-based evaluation systems.

- Develop models and establish tools, rubrics, and protocols for the performance-based evaluation of all educators.
- Develop systems requirements for data collection and storage of evaluation information.
- Analyze and report on LEAs' systems for awarding tenure based on performance-based evaluations.
- Develop a model performance-based compensation system.

Objective EE3: Ensure that all educators' professional growth and advancement is aligned to student achievement.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 a redesigned licensure renewal process will be fully implemented.

By 2015 all educators' continuation in the profession will be based on objective measures of educator effectiveness.

Strategy EE3.1 Revise and implement a new licensure renewal process.

- Develop an information system that links re-licensure to student achievement and other evidence of effective educator performance.
- Streamline areas of certification to ensure that all certificates are reasonably designed to improve student achievement of all youth and adults.
- Create a multi-tiered system of licensure that opens pathways for career advancement.

Strategy EE3.2 Ensure that LEAs and schools provide individualized and targeted professional development based on evaluation information and in support of student academic growth.

- Collect and disseminate data on LEAs' and schools' professional development outcomes.
- Provide LEAs and schools with information on best practices in professional development and quality providers.
- Fund and target professional development opportunities that build educator effectiveness.

Accelerate All Schools Toward Greatness

Goal: All schools and programs will be high-performing and provide multiple pathways for student success.

Impact Statements:

By 2012 every school and program will demonstrate aggressive gains in student achievement as measured by state-determined growth targets.

By 2015 all students will be attending high-quality schools and programs.



Every school and educational program in Rhode Island must accelerate student learning to prepare students for college, careers, and life. Although many schools and programs have demonstrated high levels of performance over several years, we know that many schools have struggled for more than a decade, resulting in generations of failure in our state, and that must stop. Approximately 47,000 students attend schools that did not meet all improvement targets for the 2008-09 school year. Of that group, 19,000 students are in schools that have missed one or more of their improvement targets for five or more years.

The state assessment results for most of these schools indicate that less than half of their students are reaching proficiency in reading and mathematics. We must and will transform these schools so that all students can be successful. The objectives and strategies described below apply to all of our schools, LEAs, and programs, and they are inclusive of the needs of diverse populations of students. Achieving these objectives requires that we all work together to identify the innovative practices and programs that make a difference in accelerating student achievement. Creating great schools and programs means working with communities, families, civic leaders, and all educators so that failing schools do not exist anywhere in Rhode Island.

Objective AS1: Ensure that all schools and programs are accelerating student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 all LEAs will be in full compliance with the Basic Education Program and meet established performance targets.

By 2015 achievement gaps across all socio-demographic groups will be reduced by 50%.

By 2012 and 2015 student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science will improve significantly (as demonstrated by the percentage point gains shown in the top right table) at elementary, middle, and high school levels.

By 2012 and 2015 adult education proficiency gains and outcomes will improve as demonstrated by the percentages in the bottom right table.

	2008	2012	2015
Percent of elementary students proficient in reading	69	84	90
Percent of elementary students proficient in mathematics	61	76	90
Percent of elementary students proficient in science	40	60	75
Percent of middle school students proficient in reading	68	83	90
Percent of middle school students proficient in mathematics	53	68	75
Percent of middle school students proficient in science	18	38	68
Percent of high school students proficient in reading	69	84	90
Percent of high school students proficient in mathematics	27	47	77
Percent of high school students proficient in science	19	49	79

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2008	2012	2015
PROFICIENCY (SKILL GAINS)			
Completion of Educational Functioning Levels Based on Pre- and Post-Test Scores			
ABE Beginning Literacy	35%	45%	55%
ABE Beginning Basic	37%	47%	57%
ABE Intermediate Low	38%	48%	58%
ABE Intermediate High	30%	40%	50%
CORE FOLLOW-UP EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES			
Obtained High School Credential	48%	58%	68%
Entered Postsecondary	14%	24%	34%
Entered Employment	78%	80%	80%
Retained Employment	88%	90%	90%

Strategy AS1.1 Improve the quality and accessibility of early learning programs available for children from age three to kindergarten.

- Provide technical assistance on Regents-approved early childhood standards.
- Approve and monitor early childhood programs.
- Identify and seek additional resources to support Pre-K expansion.
- Expand the pool of qualified providers.
- Coordinate and collaborate with other state agencies, community partners, institutes of higher education, and early childhood professionals to strengthen quality program implementation in the areas of governance, operations, and outreach.

Strategy AS1.2 Ensure that all LEAs address student achievement gaps so that schools and programs accelerate increases in student achievement.

- Establish state expectations for acceptable outcomes in student achievement based upon growth measures and metrics for closing achievement gaps.
- Conduct diagnostic analysis to identify current levels of school and LEA performance against state expectations.
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs authorized to improve school performance without state oversight.
- Implement a comprehensive visitation and monitoring system to measure effectiveness of LEA programs and supports.

Strategy AS1.3 Support all LEAs and adult education programs in the development of a system of academic, social, and emotional supports for student health and well-being.

- Establish state expectations and criteria for a meaningful system of student supports that closes achievement gaps in content areas.
- Monitor and support healthy and safe learning environments that contribute to effective student learning.
- Increase the availability of expanded learning opportunities.
- Promote active family and community engagement in improving student achievement and success.
- Collaborate with LEAs, other state agencies, institutes of higher education, and community partners to develop innovations and funding for a comprehensive system of student supports.

Objective AS2: Transform schools and programs that fail to accelerate student achievement and close gaps.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 all identified schools will be responding positively to a state-approved system of options for accelerating student achievement.

By 2015 all Rhode Island schools and programs will meet all applicable state performance targets.

Strategy AS2.1 Develop, implement, and support a menu of approved state options for transforming identified schools and programs.

- Develop and disseminate a statewide framework of policies and infrastructure to support innovations in schools, programs, and practices.
- Identify existing legal, contractual, and financial barriers to the implementation of state-endorsed innovations.
- Collaborate with state, local, and labor leaders in identifying and addressing barriers to remedying under-performance.
- Define parameters for a continuum of allowable turnaround and transformation models.
- Communicate and engage with families and students on options and implementation plans.
- Develop an infrastructure within RIDE to support a full continuum of intervention and transformation opportunities to improve school performance.
- Establish a cadre of outside turnaround and transformation providers and management specialists to implement and support state-approved models.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the various options used.

Strategy AS2.2 Support the development of leaders who are able to intervene in and transform underperforming schools and programs.

- Collaborate with educational leaders in the New England states to develop an innovative leadership program for transforming underperforming schools and LEAs.
- Engage the services of an external provider to recruit, prepare, and place individuals in leadership positions in urban schools and LEAs.
- Implement an extensive system of professional development to support existing urban school leaders.
- Seek private and public funding to support innovative leadership development programs.
- Evaluate and track the performance of newly trained leaders, including their impact on student achievement results.

Objective AS3: Create a system of multiple pathways leading to college and career readiness.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 all LEAs will provide multiple pathways that prepare students for college and careers.

By 2015 85% of high school students will graduate and successfully transition into postsecondary education and training, apprenticeships, or employment.

Strategy AS3.1 Diversify the ways that youth and adults can prepare for and access college and careers.

- Create an inventory of current pathways, identify gaps, and develop additional pathways for Regents' approval.
- Engage critical stakeholders, related state agencies, educational service organizations, the business community, and national and regional experts in the development of a full range of viable career pathways.
- Ensure the implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate cross-LEA supports for English Language Learners, students with special needs, and others who have not reached proficiency-based requirements for exiting school.
- Launch, in collaboration with workforce cabinet partner agencies, a virtual learning network that includes coursework, training, and college e-learning, including a statewide virtual high school.

- Expand in-school and out-of-school opportunities for youth and adults to build academic and technical skills and attain stackable certificates.
- Monitor and track all graduates from schools and programs on their attainment of both academic and industry-recognized credentials.

Strategy AS3.2 Provide technical assistance to schools and programs in the implementation of approved multiple pathways.

- Issue standards that multiple pathways must meet.
- Conduct program approval reviews based on the standards.
- Foster the growth of professional learning communities focused on the implementation of promising and effective practices to put into action multiple pathways for all learners.
- Ensure the provision of effective technical assistance to schools and programs in the implementation of multiple pathways.
- Increase the mandatory school attendance age to eighteen in order to facilitate increased access to the multiple-pathways system.

Strategy AS3.3 Form strategic partnerships to fully align secondary, postsecondary, and community- and work-based components of pathways.

- Expand the use of statewide articulation agreements between schools and programs for youth and adults in order to accelerate learning and maximize dual enrollment opportunities.
- Create a system of financial and job opportunity incentives in order to re-engage disconnected youth and young adults and get them to college or to work.

Strategy AS3.4 Evaluate the relative effectiveness of and returns to different pathways.

- Implement longitudinal analysis to determine how multiple pathways affect gaps in student achievement, graduation rates, and transition rates to further education, training, and employment.
- Revise the system of multiple pathways in order to eliminate pathways that are ineffective or cost-prohibitive.

Establish World-Class Standards and Assessments

Goal: Rhode Island's education system will meet international standards.

Impact Statement:

By 2015 all LEAs will have comprehensive curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems that are internationally benchmarked.

We currently have established high standards for our students, yet we want to be sure that we prepare all Rhode Island students to be internationally competitive in a global economy. We have joined with other states throughout the nation to align our standards with the National Common Core Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. This work will lead to the re-examination of our standards as well as to the design of comprehensive state and local assessment systems that ensure that we are educating our students to meet international benchmarks. The objectives and strategies articulated on the following pages represent our key actions for designing a world-class standards and assessment system that prepares all Rhode Island students for global competitiveness.



Objective WCS1: Ensure that all students have access to a rigorous curriculum aligned to internationally benchmarked standards that are taught through multiple pathways.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 all LEAs will have implemented a guaranteed and viable curriculum in reading, writing, mathematics, and science that can be easily accessed by the community.

By 2015 all LEAs will have at least two pathways for students to reach proficiency against internationally benchmarked standards.

Strategy WCS1.1 Ensure that the Rhode Island content standards are aligned to the National Common Core Standards.

- Conduct, in partnership with the NECAP states, an alignment study between the existing Rhode Island standards and the National Common Core Standards.
- Revise the current standards to align with or adopt the National Common Core Standards.
- Design and implement appropriate professional development to ensure that teachers and teacher leaders understand the revised content standards.

Strategy WCS1.2 Coordinate the review, development, and monitoring systems for rigorous curricula in English language arts, mathematics, and science.

- Develop and pilot a curriculum audit tool to determine the level of support each LEA needs in order to have a rigorous curriculum in English language arts, mathematics, and science.
- Train education leaders to conduct a curriculum audit in each of the three content areas.
- Create a five-year state plan that prioritizes LEAs' curriculum support needs in each content area and that is based on the audit tool data and student achievement information.
- Facilitate the development of curricula in LEA partnerships with the Dana Center and Intermediary Service Providers.
- Disseminate model curricula and units of study to share best practices and to support inter-LEA collaboration.
- Train education leaders to monitor the fidelity of curriculum implementation within their schools and classrooms.

Strategy WCS1.3 Support the use of successful programs and structures in reading, writing, and mathematics for students who need additional support.

- Provide guidelines for intervention programs in reading, writing, and mathematics that include specifications that identify program requirements, teacher expertise requirements, profiles of students who are successful with each model, and costs.
- Provide specifications for best-practice models and program requirements for English Language Learners that address varying levels of English proficiency, first-language literacy levels, and age of entry into United States schools.

Objective WCS2: Implement high-quality state assessments aligned to internationally benchmarked standards.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 Rhode Island will have a state assessment system that is aligned to the National Common Core Standards.

By 2015 all LEA high schools will ensure that students are able to reach proficiency against internationally benchmarked standards through multiple pathways.

Strategy WCS2.1 Review and revise the state assessment system as needed to align with the National Common Core Standards.

- Review the alignment of NECAP to the National Common Core Standards.
- Based on the findings of the alignment review, revise the NECAP program and explore expanding state membership to include all New England states.
- Develop a data analysis tools as part of the instructional management system to support the use of NECAP results.

Strategy WCS2.2 Connect Rhode Island schools to nationally and internationally benchmarked assessments that are aligned to alternate pathways for students.

- Continue our partnership with the Achieve Network for end-of-course assessments in Algebra I and II.
- Pilot the use of at least one board examination in high schools that supports students' pathways within and beyond high school.
- Expand the use of technical skills assessments aligned to pathways in all career and technical programs.

Objective WCS3: Monitor and support LEA implementation of comprehensive local assessment and reporting systems based on internationally benchmarked standards.


Objective Measures:

By 2012 all LEAs will have a comprehensive PK-12 assessment system in reading, writing, mathematics, and science that includes both formative and interim assessments aligned to curriculum and internationally benchmarked standards.

By 2015 all LEAs will have student grading and progress reporting systems aligned to internationally benchmarked standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

Strategy WCS3.1 Provide logistical support for the development and use of formative and summative assessment processes and data.

- Identify delivery systems for and providers of technical assistance on the development of formative, interim, and summative assessments.

- 
- Support the development of an online statewide instructional management system to facilitate LEA work in the development of local assessment systems.
 - Facilitate the improvement of educator leaders' ability to identify professional development needs based on the analysis of student achievement data (both formative and summative).
 - Provide models of standard queries for the use of local and state assessment system data to improve instruction and assessment.

Strategy WCS3.2 Identify models and practices that support the implementation of comprehensive local assessment systems, including graduation by proficiency assessments.

- Provide guidance documents and templates that specify the features and components of effective comprehensive local assessment systems.
- Provide examples of benchmarked student work (K-12) against key standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.
- Identify professional development providers and models to support the implementation of effective assessment systems.
- Coordinate technical assistance sessions, networks, and collaborations with external groups to ensure that all LEAs will have well implemented assessment systems.
- Coordinate the regular update and review of online models and support materials for the implementation of assessment systems.

Develop User-Friendly Data Systems



Goal: Rhode Island will have a data-driven culture of education decision-making.

Impact Statements:

By 2012 every Rhode Islander will be able to access user-friendly data on student achievement and school and LEA performance in their community.

By 2015 all LEAs will demonstrate data-driven decisions that lead to student, classroom, school, and LEA improvement.

Improving student achievement is highly dependent on effectively analyzing and using the data that we collect. One way we will know how we are doing, both along the way and at certain benchmarks, is through the use of data. Today, we know we collect a lot of data, but we seldom use the data to evaluate programs, inform instruction, or monitor how we invest our resources to yield the most effective results. We must create user-friendly data systems, instructional-management tools, and systems of reports so that all Rhode Islanders can access information that will help them make the decisions that improve education in Rhode Island. We will need to build strong data governance throughout our systems and create innovative partnerships with LEAs, state agencies, institutes of higher education, and community groups to foster a culture of effective data use and accountability. The objectives and strategies articulated on the following pages set the pathway for creating a data-driven culture of education decision-making.

Objective DS1: Improve the availability and accessibility of accurate data on student, teacher, school, and LEA performance.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 school and classroom data linking student achievement with teacher effectiveness in the form of easy-to-read reports through a web-based portal will be available to the public.

By 2015 parents and the community will utilize available tools to view data on student achievement and school performance, as demonstrated by usage metrics and survey data.

Strategy DS1.1 Create tools to provide access to user-friendly data.

- Perform a system requirements analysis for each intended user group.
- Develop a variety of data dashboards with a look, feel, and level of functionality specific to each user group.
- Build appropriate levels of functionality in the data warehouse to support the data dashboards.
- Develop various reports that will be available to different users focusing on canned (live feed) reports and limited query reports.

Strategy DS1.2 Engage and educate the public about data that can be used to better understand and support student achievement.

- Develop a plan for public education, outreach, training, and communication on the use of data.
- Develop an online toolkit for training and support on the use of data.
- Provide direct training and “train-the-trainer” to improve the use of data in decision-making.

Objective DS2: Ensure that the data and technology infrastructure support the sharing of high-quality data accessible in real-time and are able to promote continuous improvement.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 the Rhode Island education data system will fully meet the criteria for having the 10 essential elements identified by the Data Quality Campaign and will be able to link with systems across state agencies.

By 2015 education data will be clean and accurate as measured against standards for accuracy for specific data elements as set forth in a prescribed data dictionary.

Strategy DS2.1 Establish a vertically and horizontally integrated statewide data system that provides single-point access to comprehensive education, demographic, and human services data for every student PK-20.

- Complete the integration of internal databases (Special Education, Career and Technical Education, Educator Quality, Finance, Adult Basic Education, and GED) into the data warehouse.
- Integrate the data warehouse with the higher education database or integrate it directly into the schools themselves (vertical).
- Create the ability to merge RIDE data with data from the Department of Labor & Training and state health/social services agencies (horizontal).

- Integrate the Pre-K data system into the data warehouse.
- Align the common course codes to state standards.

Strategy DS2.2 Ensure that there are processes and structures set up to support ownership around data integrity/quality and the meaningful use of data by all stakeholders.

- Develop and implement a full data governance/stewardship model.
- Enter into data-sharing agreements with key partners.
- Create data standards and a data dictionary.
- Develop and implement a state model for data quality, including audits and monitoring.

Objective DS3: Create the ability for educators to use relevant data to inform decisions for improving instructional practices and classroom outcomes.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 educators and school leaders will demonstrate the consistent use of an instructional management system to link programs and services to student achievement data in order to provide more effective instruction and interventions for students.

By 2015 all Rhode Island LEAs will demonstrate continuous closure of achievement gaps by disaggregated student population as measured against state-established growth targets.

Strategy DS3.1 Create tools for educators and researchers to access data that will help improve instruction.

- Provide a portal that allows LEAs to upload local assessments and other school-level instructional data.
- Develop requirements for LEAs to be able to link their local assessment data with state data, regardless of the local platform.
- Build a state-supported instructional management tool that LEAs can use to access both state and local instructional data.

Strategy DS3.2 Provide support to LEAs and individual educators in using data to improve instruction.

- Provide guidance and/or professional development to LEAs and schools on how to apply instructional management information to improve instruction.
- Build a community-in-practice model that offers networks and supports to LEAs, schools, and individual educators to learn and share best practices as well as to collaboratively problem-solve.
- Develop online toolkits to improve instruction.
- Provide direct training and “train-the-trainer” on the tools to improve instruction.

Objective DS4: Redesign the school and LEA accountability processes to extend beyond NECAP results to include valid and reliable data against key indicators so that the appropriate supports, interventions, enhancements, and improvements can be targeted effectively to improve student achievement.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 Rhode Island will have implemented a performance management system based on student growth and teacher effectiveness to measure the performance of schools and teachers.

By 2015 Rhode Island will be able to demonstrate a 30% increase in student achievement directly tied to a system of supports and interventions.

Strategy DS4.1 Develop an accountability process that accurately measures the effectiveness of school and LEA programs, supports, and interventions.

- Develop systems requirements for collecting data related to student-level supports, including evaluations and individualized supports.
- Develop metrics for a growth model, gap analysis, and teacher effectiveness.
- Develop query-driven reports that apply performance metrics to disaggregated data in order to improve student achievement.

Strategy DS4.2 Develop standards and processes for how performance metrics are to be used to improve student achievement.

- Develop a methodology for including growth metrics and teacher effectiveness into a system of state performance measures, and possibly into measures of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- Develop performance measures for systems requirements of the Basic Education Program.
- Create a set of diagnostic metrics to match capacity and systems measures to specific interventions and initiatives that will ensure the acceleration of student achievement.

Invest Our Resources Wisely

Goal: Rhode Island's education finance system will support student achievement.

Impact Statements:

By 2012 Rhode Island will distribute state education aid through a formula aligned to the Basic Education Program that includes incentives for student achievement and efficiencies.

By 2015 all LEAs will link expenditure and achievement data to drive the return on investments and to increase student achievement.



Our investment in education matters to the lives of children, to the health of our community, and to our economic future. Rhode Island has made a large investment in education, yet we have not realized world-class schools and programs throughout the state. We must create an education finance system that supports student achievement and ensures that we get the best return on the investments we make. In creating this finance system, we need a funding formula for Rhode Island schools that abides by the principles of equity, accountability, effectiveness, and stewardship. We must take every opportunity to be more efficient across the state, to direct savings from efficiencies toward improving student achievement, and to aggressively seek public and private funding to support innovation and bold actions. The objectives and strategies outlined on the following pages require that we work with all levels of government and with stakeholder groups to ensure that all are capable stewards accountable for our investments in education.

Objective IRW1: Ensure that schools and students are adequately and equitably funded to attain internationally benchmarked standards for college and career readiness.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 Rhode Island will compare its per-pupil expenditure relative to the per-pupil expenditure of selected top-performing states and/or nations or systems (ratio).

By 2015 all LEAs will meet or exceed Regents' targets for student achievement relative to adequacy of funding levels.

Strategy IRW1.1 Promote an equitable and predictable funding formula to support the education of all students, including adult learners.

- Advocate for and disseminate a Regents-approved methodology for a funding formula.
- Develop and implement a communications plan to support a funding formula.
- Inform and engage all constituents and stakeholders to ensure their understanding of the formula.
- Cost out the Basic Education Program to update the foundation amount for the formula.

Strategy IRW1.2 Consolidate and promote efficiencies for the application, reporting, and accounting systems for schools and programs.

- Develop, implement, and continually improve statewide electronic systems for application, reporting, and accounting of state and federal funds.
- Build capacity through training and support for end users (e.g., LEAs, community-based organizations) to establish, operate, and maintain new and upgraded systems.
- Continually assess the quality of systems and strive for improvement.
- Leverage strategic partnerships with various organizations (e.g., RISSA, RIASBO) to advocate for systems reform.

Strategy IRW1.3 Aggressively seek public and private funding to assist in the implementation of the strategic plan.

- Identify resource gaps.
- Develop a revenue-generating strategy.
- Leverage strategic partnerships with corporate and community foundations and philanthropists to establish an innovation and excellence fund.
- Distribute funding to initiatives that meet the Board of Regents' criteria for innovation, impact, and greatness.

Objective IRW2: Ensure that resources are invested appropriately and directed toward areas that will improve student achievement statewide.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 at least two new statewide efficiencies will be implemented and will generate savings that are redirected to improve student achievement.

By 2015 the share of per-pupil expenditure attributed to administrative costs will not exceed the established statewide standard.

Strategy IRW2.1 Create tools and processes for guiding innovation and cost efficiencies tied to increases in student achievement.

- Engage LEA, education, and business leaders in identifying and developing strategies for cost effectiveness.
- Propose and support the implementation of approved statewide efficiencies to increase the return on investments.
- Conduct a statewide assessment of school facility conditions and capacity to establish a baseline and recommend efficiency benchmarks.
- Propose legislative language to facilitate consolidation and to redirect resources to programs that promote student achievement.
- Develop incentives for the more efficient use of facilities and develop ways to address inefficient use.
- Inform and engage constituents and stakeholders regarding statewide efficiency proposals.
- Assess financial data to develop cost-effectiveness standards that accelerate student achievement.

Strategy IRW2.2 Evaluate the tools and processes for guiding innovation, creating efficiencies, and improving student achievement.

- Monitor the results of implemented statewide efficiencies for actual savings.
- Disseminate information on actual savings from statewide efficiencies to all constituents and stakeholders.
- Evaluate how LEAs have redirected savings from statewide efficiencies.
- Analyze student achievement changes in LEAs that have generated large savings from efficiencies.

Objective IRW3: Ensure that school budgets are responsive and relevant so as to maximize student achievement.

Objective Measures:

By 2012 all LEAs will use the uniform chart of accounts for decision-making that improves student achievement.

By 2015 all LEAs will use a Regents-approved budget model, such as zero-based budgeting, to maximize resources.

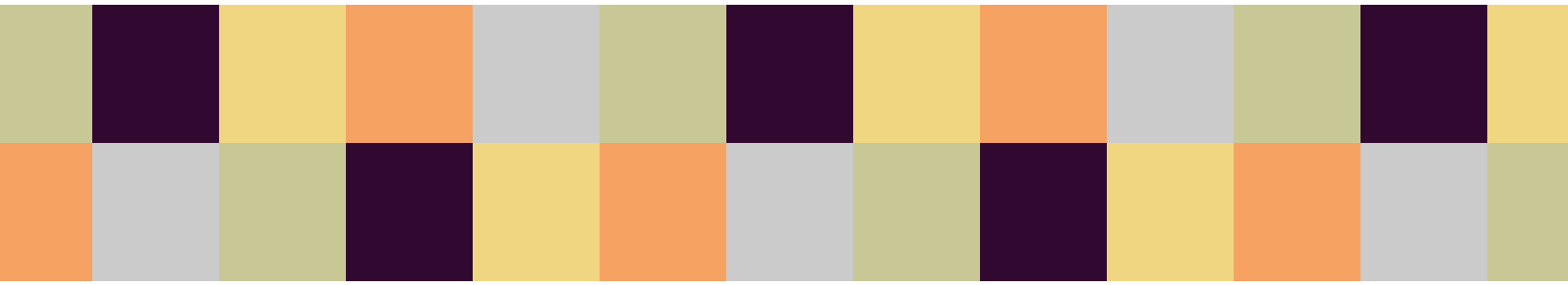
Strategy IRW3.1 Standardize school budgets so that they annually assess investment priorities and incorporate long-range planning.

- Develop a Regents-approved budget model that incorporates cost effectiveness standards.
- Inform and educate all constituents on the benefits of the approved budget model and best practices for long-range planning, budget development, and budget administration for the greatest educational return.
- Assess and report on the implementation of overall budgeting strategies.

Strategy IRW3.2 Identify effective practices in linking education investments to student achievement.

- Compare statewide spending patterns with student achievement results by selected programs and sub-populations.
- Identify correlations between investments and increases in student achievement.
- Collaborate with professional associations and the business community to promote the implementation of effective practices.

Provide Primary Support



Goal: All RIDE staff members will provide reliable, timely, and high-quality services to all Rhode Island LEAs, schools, and residents.

Implementing this strategic plan will require changes within the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE). We will have to adjust our tasks, practices, and operational systems as we take on new work, stop doing some of the work we currently are doing, and do many required tasks in new, strategic ways. We know that at the heart of our change is our strong belief that we are part of creating the best education system for our students, educators, and communities. The objectives and strategies below set out the beginning steps for uniting everyone at RIDE toward becoming the highest performing state education agency in the country.



Objective RIDE1: Set clear expectations and processes for all RIDE staff on providing timely and reliable services to the public.

- Strategy RIDE1.1 Create and document the expectations and processes for customer service.
- Strategy RIDE1.2 Provide training and ongoing support to RIDE staff on the expectations and processes.
- Strategy RIDE1.3 Disseminate processes and constituent surveys to customers.

Objective RIDE2: Align all RIDE resources, structures, and strategies to focus on preparing students for success in college, careers, and life.

- Strategy RIDE2.1 Engage in the ongoing analysis, planning, and evaluation of fiscal and human resources and organizational processes and structures and their focus on improving student results.
- Strategy RIDE2.2 Develop a learning culture that engages in continuous development related to analysis of the strategic plan against its targeted results.

Objective RIDE3: Use data and established performance measures to make improvements in the organization and functioning of RIDE.

- Strategy RIDE3.1 Create performance measures and data tools that support agency decision-making on progress being made at achieving goals and objectives.
- Strategy RIDE3.2 Implement a performance-management system that addresses recruitment, selection, and promotion based on meeting the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.
- Strategy RIDE3.3 Analyze and use data from customer surveys to improve internal processes and services.

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