

**Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
 FY 2017 Revised and FY 2018 Request
 BR-10 Narrative Information**

Narrative Information	Agency: Elementary & Secondary Education
	Program: Metropolitan Regional Career & Tech Center
	Subprogram: N/A

Program Description

The Metropolitan Regional Career & Technical Center (The MET) is a state operated high school that is designed to provide an integrated academic and vocational curriculum tailored to the needs of individual students statewide. The MET is also the only RIDE approved innovative CTE program in the state. Approved by a voter referendum in 1994 and enacted into legislation, The MET opened in 1996 with 57 ninth grade students located in downtown Providence in the Shepard Building. In 2002, the Public Street Campus was occupied increasing enrollment to 600 students. The MET now operates five schools at two separate campuses in Providence and at a third campus which opened in Newport in the Fall of 2006. In fiscal year 2011, The MET's enrollment capacity was 690 students and was further increased to 784 students in fiscal year 2012 with the construction of additional instruction space within existing building footprints. The MET's anticipated enrollment for fiscal year 2017 is 818 and the same for fiscal year 2018. In the Fall of 2012, The MET opened the country's first free-standing center for entrepreneurship at a public high school which was constructed using the remaining balance of funds available in the General Obligation bond that afforded the construction of the Public Street Campus. In addition, construction was completed on the new Paul W. Crowley Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center in Newport in January 2014. The project and building has received much notoriety and publicity as it is the most energy efficient school building in the State. It also was awarded the US Department of Education Green Ribbon award.

The MET's mission is to develop graduates who are active and responsible citizens, productive skilled workers and life-long learners. One student at a time, The MET provides a personalized learning environment that allows students to take control of their learning and gain the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve success beyond high school. In addition, The MET works to improve student performance by providing an integrated academic and vocational curriculum according to individual needs of each student. The MET establishes strong partnerships with families, businesses, colleges and the community in order to provide real-world learning opportunities for students so that they may achieve postsecondary success.

The MET operates as a local educational agency and is governed by a Board of Trustees. With the exception of those powers and duties reserved by law to the Director, the Commissioner, and the Board of Education, the Board of Trustees is invested with all powers and duties provided to school committees under statute.

STATUTORY HISTORY

Title 16, Chapter 45, Section 1-9 of the Rhode Island General Laws refers to vocational education.

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PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The MET is more than a cutting-edge school. It is the centerpiece of a state and national reform initiative whose mission is to act as a catalyst for the people and resources of this country to rethink and redesign secondary and career technical education in a systemic way.

The MET's innovative program and architectural design is based on these core principles:

- **Small school size:** The MET includes small personalized learning communities that serve students of all abilities and interests. Each school may have between 128 - 160 students. National research on small schools is clear in its assessment that small schools rank higher in basic skills and student attendance and lower in discipline problems than larger schools.
- **Advisory structure:** A core student group of 16 students serves as a student's advisory and center of accountability. Advisories meet daily and serve as the core learning community for that group of students for four years. A Rhode Island certified teacher called an advisor facilitates and assesses each student's learning in their advisory for the entire four years. He/she serves as a teaching generalist, finding educational resources for the students, ensuring that the personalized learning plans target key academic learning goals, working with mentors to ensure the rigor of internships, and actively involving parents in their children's education.
- **Personalized education:** Each student at The MET has a comprehensive/individualized learning plan that the student crafts with the guidance of the advisor, parent/guardian, and the internship mentor. Combining the perspectives of those who know the student best increases the student's potential, choices, and self-esteem as a learner and provides more targeted and relevant learning targets. The whole learning team meets regularly throughout the school year to review the student's progress, and make recommendations/revisions to the student's learning plan based on progress to date. The learning plan identifies the student's particular academic and developmental needs, describes authentic project work and investigations to meet these goals, and outlines expected outcomes and timelines. The framework for the plan is the five learning goals and school-wide grade-level expectations.
- **Learning Goals:** The five learning goal areas are:
 - **Empirical Reasoning:** requires that a student learn to think like a scientist: to use empirical evidence and a logical process to make decisions and to evaluate hypotheses, and to develop strategies to test ideas. It does not reflect specific science content material, but instead incorporates the perspective of a scientist in various content areas from physics to sociology.
 - **Quantitative Reasoning:** requires that a student learn to think like a mathematician: to understand numbers and basic operations, to use tables and graphs, to analyze, to estimate, and to integrate algebra, geometry and statistics into their work.

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- - Communication: requires that a student learn to be a great communicator: to understand his/her audience, to write, to read, to speak and to listen well, to use technology/multimedia and artistic expression to communicate, and to be exposed to another language.
 - Social Reasoning: requires that a student learn to think like an historian or anthropologist: to recognize diverse perspectives, to understand social issues, to explore ethics, and to look at issues historically.
 - Personal Qualities: requires that a student learn to be the best he or she can be: to demonstrate respect, responsibility, organization, leadership, and to reflect on personal abilities and strive for improvement
- Real World Learning: The MET fosters learning through consequential work in the community. Internships provide the primary structure for engaging students in the real world. The LTI (Learning Through Internship) is the primary vehicle for student learning. After a period during which the student explores his/her interests, the student finds an internship where he/she receives the professional guidance necessary to learn through his/her interest. It is where students begin a real-world project while developing a one-on-one mentoring relationship with a professional adult. The school's goal is to have each student spend two days a week engaged in meaningful project work outside the school building.

Advisors coordinate this work, ensuring that it is integrated with the student's learning goals and school-based study. It is important to note that such real-world work is intended to foster broad learning applicable to all fields, and to be developmental as opposed to strictly vocational. Through the LTI program The MET has placed students in school time internships in more than 1,500 businesses, hospitals, colleges, art studios, day care centers, and community agencies, engaging more than 2,000 adult mentors who guide students in real world learning experiences throughout their high school careers.

- Authentic assessment: Each student must create a portfolio of his/her work; present public exhibitions of work each trimester; receive in-depth written narrative assessments from advisors; and pass a gateway exhibition at the end of the second year and graduation requirements at the culmination of the fourth and final year, including a senior thesis project.

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- Focus on community: The MET is a vibrant and inclusive learning community that values diversity and respect. Each in-house school day begins with a “Pick Me Up,” an all-school gathering at which students showcase their work and guests from the community give performances and presentations. Whole community events for staff, The MET puts out an internal informal staff newsletter (TGIF) that includes reflective writing as well as logistical updates. This focus on relationships and respect become the foundation for trust and healthy academic challenge and risk taking required for learning. Family engagement: The MET enrolls whole families and empowers parents to play an active role in their child’s education and in the school community. Parents/guardians at The MET must agree to take part in regular learning plan team meetings and are expected to attend their child’s quarterly exhibitions as well as a number of functions throughout the year. The MET holds an orientation for new families; organizes social, cultural, and educational activities for families; and supports parents/guardians in their role as educators.
- Eye on the big picture: The MET has been the example for 16 years of a successful urban school. It has been the model that is behind the Rhode Island state high school requirements and structure. The state now demands advisories, learning plans, senior thesis projects, and internships of all high schools. The MET has also
- Been the model for over 60 high schools nationally (20 cities), and internationally (Netherlands, Australia, and Korea). The state of Rhode Island has made a commitment to not only looking at standardized test data, but also to study other factors in a school that determine learning/development through the SALT/SurveyWorks survey of students, parents, and teachers. According to Information Works, The MET has consistently over the past 13 years ranked higher than all Providence high schools in attendance, least number of dropouts, graduation rates, and college attendance. The MET has been #1 and #2 in the state every year in parent involvement, school culture, and instruction. The MET is also number one in teachers examining students’ work, giving instruction in writing skills, and giving feedback to students on their work.

PROPOSED BUDGET IMPACT

The MET over the past eighteen years has created a school with proven outcomes; has managed a remarkable growth of both staff and students who have come together as a cohesive school community; has overseen a major construction project for its Providence campus; and planned and opened a Newport campus in response to a state mandate. By legislation proposed by RIDE and approved by the General Assembly, the MET is now funded via the school funding formula which became effective fiscal year 2012. More specifically, The MET will no longer be a school fully funded by the State.

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Instead, a portion of The MET's annual budget will come from State general revenues, and a portion referred as "local share" will come from each of The MET's sending districts.

The MET is supportive of the funding formula which is a transparent, validated, equitable mechanism for funding public education in our state however, the formula as structured severely affects the continued operation of The MET. Of the fifty seven municipal school districts, charter schools and state operated schools in our State, the MET is experiencing the largest reduction is state aid, 63%, as a result of the implementation of the formula. Given that the MET is a state operated school, it does not have certain abilities that are possessed by school districts that operate within a municipality such as the ability to leverage local tax revenue and the ability to distribute funding formula aid across multiple schools and grade levels as necessary. Without an alternative funding approach or an additional funding source to fund the 20% to 40% additional cost of operations associated with career and technical schools*, the reduction in funding will significantly impact The MET's ability to deliver programs and special services to the students that we serve.

Along with increasing enrollment to generate more revenue during FY2012, The MET made drastic cuts in staffing along with a salary and step freeze for all staff. In FY2013, additional savings were generated from changes made to our benefit plans and a reorganization of our IT Department. Such changes have balanced the budget for FY2014 thru FY2016. Beyond FY2016, local aid from sending district peaks while state aid continues to decline for an additional five years. Our projections calculate a budget deficits growing from approximately \$2M. to an excess of \$5M. through FY 2022. The result is that The MET may be forced to continue to look at changes that may include program redesign, program downsizing, program elimination, or special services/needs reduction above and beyond reductions already made in prior fiscal years, due to fiscal constraints of the funding formula.

* Data obtained from 1.) Financing Vocational Education, A State Policymaker's Guide, Steven Klein, June 2001, Distributed in collaboration with National Association of State Director of Vocational Education Consortium and National Conference of State Legislatures. 2.) Final Report of the Foundation Aid Technical Advisory Group to the Joint Committee to Establish a Permanent Foundation Aid Formula for Rhode Island, May 30, 2007.

Agency: 072 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

	FY 2015 Actuals:	FY 2016 Actuals:	FY 2017 Enacted:	FY 2017 Working:	FY 2017 Revised Budget:	FY 2018 Unconstrained Budget:	FY 2018 Constrained Budget:
Program: 04 Metropolitan Career and Technical School							
By Subprogram							
0401 Metropolitan Career & Tech Sch	\$12,406,596	\$10,622,493	\$10,442,007	\$10,442,007	\$12,871,003	\$10,530,907	\$10,530,907
	\$12,406,596	\$10,622,493	\$10,442,007	\$10,442,007	\$12,871,003	\$10,530,907	\$10,530,907
By Category							
30 Contracted Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
60 Capital Purchases and Equipment	\$1,762,910	\$658,068	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$3,528,996	\$1,188,900	\$1,188,900
70 Aid to Local Units of Government	\$875,113	\$0	(\$23,262)	(\$23,262)	\$0	\$0	\$0
90 Operating Transfers	\$9,768,573	\$9,964,425	\$9,365,269	\$9,365,269	\$9,342,007	\$9,342,007	\$9,342,007
	\$12,406,596	\$10,622,493	\$10,442,007	\$10,442,007	\$12,871,003	\$10,530,907	\$10,530,907
By Source							
01 General Revenue	\$10,501,360	\$9,864,425	\$9,342,007	\$9,342,007	\$9,342,007	\$9,342,007	\$9,342,007
05 Operating Transfers from Other Funds	\$1,905,236	\$758,068	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$3,528,996	\$1,188,900	\$1,188,900
	\$12,406,596	\$10,622,493	\$10,442,007	\$10,442,007	\$12,871,003	\$10,530,907	\$10,530,907

Thursday, September 29, 2016

