


# ESEA FLEXIBILITY

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## Renewal Form

## Rhode Island



March 31, 2015

OMB Number: ~~1810-0708~~0581

~~Paperwork Burden Statement~~

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 16 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to retain the benefits of ESEA flexibility, offered to State educational agencies under section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, and voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1810-0581. Note: Please do not return the completed ESEA Flexibility Renewal Request Form to this address.

## Table of Contents

Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request.....	54
Waivers.....	65
Assurances.....	98
<b>Consultation.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Evaluation.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Overview of SEA’s Request for ESEA Flexibility.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations.....</b>	<b>30</b>
1.A— Adopt College- and Career-Ready Standards.....	30
1.B— Transition to College and Career Ready Standards.....	31
1.C— High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth.....	62
<b>Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark</b>
<b>not defined.</b>	<b>46</b>
2.A— Develop and Implement a System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support.....	63
2.B— Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives.....	105
2.C— Reward Schools.....	106
2.D— Priority Schools.....	110
2.E— Focus Schools.....	144
2.F— Provide Incentives and Supports for other Title I Schools.....	160
2.G— Build Capacity to Improve Student Learning.....	167
<b>Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership.....</b>	<b>173</b>
3.A— Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Evaluation and Support Systems.....	173
3.B— Ensure LEAs Implement Evaluation and Support Systems.....	180
<b>Evaluation.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Overview of SEA’s Request for ESEA Flexibility.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations.....</b>	<b>30</b>
1.A— Adopt College- and Career-Ready Standards.....	30
1.B— Transition to College and Career Ready Standards.....	31
1.C— High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth.....	62
<b>Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support.....</b>	<b>52</b>
2.A— Develop and Implement a System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support.....	63
2.B— Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives.....	105
2.C— Reward Schools.....	106
2.D— Priority Schools.....	110
2.E— Focus Schools.....	144
2.F— Provide Incentives and Supports for other Title I Schools.....	160
2.G— Build Capacity to Improve Student Learning.....	167
<b>Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership.....</b>	<b>122</b>
3.A— Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Evaluation and Support Systems.....	122
3.B— Ensure LEAs Implement Evaluation and Support Systems.....	129

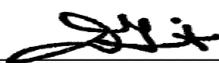
LABEL	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS
1	<del>*Notice to LEAs</del>
2	<del>*Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)</del>
3	<del>*Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request</del>
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State’s standards adoption process
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State’s standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)
6	<del>State’s Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)</del> <i>Not applicable</i>
7	<del>Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)</del> <i>Not applicable</i>
8	<del>A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups (if applicable)</del> <i>Not applicable</i>
9	<del>Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools</del> <i>Not applicable</i>
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems
12	<del>* Part 1: Consultation with educators</del>
13	<del>* Part 2: Consultation with the public at large</del>
14	<del>* Consultation — Question 1 — answer submitted in 2012 application</del>
15	<del>* Consultation — Question 2 — answer submitted in 2012 application</del>

LABEL	LIST OF APPENDICES
A	<del>Rank-Ordered School List with Scoring Detail</del>
B	<del>BEP Performance Measures</del>
C	<del>Priority and Focus School Implementation Timeline</del>

<del>D</del>	<del>RIDE Commitments to LEAs serving Priority and Focus Schools</del>
<del>E</del>	<del>AMO Supporting Materials</del>
<del>F</del>	<del>Dr. Ramirez Letter of February 1, 2012</del>
<del>G</del>	<del>Rhode Island LEP/ELL Advisory Council Feedback on ESEA Request</del>
<del>H</del>	<del>Educator Evaluation Guidance Document</del>

~~\* Designated attachments provide information specific to the 2014 Flexibility Extension Request.~~

**COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST**

Legal Name of Requester: <del>Deborah A. Gist</del>	Requester's Mailing Address: <del>Rhode Island Department of Elementary &amp; Secondary Education          255 Westminister Street          Providence, Rhode Island 02903</del>
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility -Request  Name: <del>David V. Abbott</del>  Position and Office: <del>Deputy Commissioner/General Counsel</del> <del>Commissioner's Office</del>  Contact's Mailing Address: <del>Rhode Island Department of Elementary &amp; Secondary Education          255 Westminister Street          Providence, Rhode Island 02903</del>  Telephone: <del>401-222-8703</del>  Fax: <del>401-222-2734</del>  Email address: <del>david.abbott@ride.ri.gov</del>	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): <del>Deborah A. Gist</del>	Telephone: <del>401-222-4690</del>
Signature of the Chief State School Officer:  X 	Date: <del>05/12/2014</del>
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of <del>the</del> -ESEA <del>Flexibility</del> <u>flexibility</u> .	

## WAIVERS

By submitting this updated ESEA flexibility request, the SEA ~~requests~~ renews its request for flexibility through waivers of the ~~ten~~ nine ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements, as well as any optional waivers the SEA has chosen to request under ESEA flexibility, by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; ~~a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.~~

1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a ~~schoolwide~~ school-wide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs

in order to serve any of the State’s priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State’s reward schools that meet the definition of “reward schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

~~10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State’s priority schools that meet the definition of “priority schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.~~

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

~~11.~~  10. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

~~12~~11. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA’s State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools ~~that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.~~

~~13~~12. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if -that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

13. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver in addition to waiver #6 so that, when it has remaining section 1003(a) funds after ensuring that all priority and focus schools have sufficient funds to carry out interventions, it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs to provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in other Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #13, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request that it has a process to ensure, on an annual basis, that all of its priority and focus schools will have sufficient funding to implement their required interventions prior to distributing ESEA section 1003(a) funds to other Title I schools.

14. The requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i) that, respectively, require the SEA to apply the same academic content and academic achievement standards to all public schools and public school children in the State and to administer the same academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students. The SEA requests this waiver so that it is not required to double test a student who is not yet enrolled in high school but who takes advanced, high school level, mathematics coursework. The SEA would assess such a student with the corresponding advanced, high school level assessment in place of the mathematics assessment the SEA would otherwise administer to the student for the grade in which the student is enrolled. For Federal accountability purposes, the SEA will use the results of the advanced, high school level, mathematics assessment in the year in which the assessment is administered and will administer one or more additional advanced, high school level, mathematics assessments to such students in high school, consistent with the State's mathematics content standards, and use the results in high school accountability determinations.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #14, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request how it will ensure that every student in the State has the opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school.

## ASSURANCES

By submitting this request, the SEA assures that:

- 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of ESEA flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- 2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 3. It will administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii) no later than the 2015–2016 school year. (Principle 1)
- 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- 7. It will annually make public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools prior to the start of the school year as well as publicly recognize its reward schools, and will update its lists of priority and focus schools at least every three years. (Principle 2)

**If the SEA is not submitting with its renewal request its updated list of priority and focus schools, based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, it must also assure that:**

- 8. It will provide to the Department, no later than January 31, 2016, an updated list of priority and focus schools, identified based on school year 2014–2015 data, for implementation beginning in the 2016–2017 school year.

9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its ESEA flexibility request.
11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. (Attachment 2)
12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public (e.g., by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice. (Attachment 3)
13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout its ESEA flexibility request, and will ensure that all such reports, data, and evidence are accurate, reliable, and complete or, if it is aware of issues related to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of its reports, data, or evidence, it will disclose those issues.
14. It will report annually on its State report card and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group, each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II), and for any combined subgroup (as applicable): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. In addition, it will annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively. It will ensure that all reporting is consistent with *State and Local Report Cards Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended Non-Regulatory Guidance* (February 8, 2013).

### **Principle 3 Assurances**

Each SEA must select the appropriate option and, in doing so, assures that:

<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>	<b>Option C</b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.a. The SEA is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on State assessments into educator ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals.</p>	<p>If an SEA that is administering new State assessments during the 2014–2015 school year is requesting one additional year to incorporate student growth based on these assessments, it will:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.b.i. Continue to ensure that its LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation systems using multiple measures, and that the SEA or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.b.ii. Ensure that each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year.</p>	<p>If the SEA is requesting modifications to its teacher and principal evaluation and support system guidelines or implementation timeline other than those described in Option B, which require additional flexibility from the guidance in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> as well as the documents related to the additional flexibility offered by the Assistant Secretary in a letter dated August 2, 2013, it will:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15.c. Provide a narrative response in its redlined <i>ESEA flexibility</i> request as described in Section II of the <i>ESEA flexibility renewal guidance</i>.</p>

## Consultation

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

Rhode Island Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist maintains a strong commitment to engaging stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives. In keeping with that commitment, the R.I. Department of Education has engaged in and solicited input from the education field since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request in 2012 and throughout the preparation of this application for renewal of the Request. ~~Please note that the Consultation section is completely new and does not reflect a red-lining of our 2012 ESEA Waiver Application.~~<sup>†</sup>

**Principle 1 – College- and Career-Ready Expectations, and  
Principle 2 – Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

### Accountability

When the U.S. Department of Education approved the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request on May 23, 2012, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) implemented a new system of school recognition, accountability, and support. RIDE described the new system this way:

RIDE will classify schools based on:

- **Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?
- **Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?
- **Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners?
- **Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?
- **Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?
- **Improvement (high schools):** Is the school improving annually?
- **Graduation (high schools):** Are all students ready for success?

<sup>†</sup>The "Consultation" section submitted as part of Rhode Island's 2012 ESEA Flexibility Request is included herein in its entirety as Attachments 14 and 15.

After classifying schools using these measures, RIDE will identify schools in need of support and intervention and will diagnose the needs of each identified school. Each school that RIDE identifies will develop a multi-year intervention plan, which RIDE will monitor. The plans will include numerous reform strategies – in the areas of leadership, support, infrastructure, and content – that will be targeted to address the specific needs of each identified school.

RIDE will also use the classification system to commend schools that have attained high achievement levels or that are making dramatic progress.

As Rhode Island has transitioned toward college- and career-ready standards (the Common Core State Standards) and toward high-quality assessments aligned with these standards to measure student growth (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, PARCC), we have faced the need to redesign some component elements of our system for school accountability and support. In particular, this need arose because of the transition from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) to PARCC assessments. ~~We have based all but one component (graduation rates) of our accountability system on data that we derive from state assessments. The transition to PARCC, which will begin during in the coming current (2014-15) school year, will demand technical review and revision to the methods used to calculate progress toward targets, student growth, and annual improvement bridging the two assessments systems.~~ Based on feedback Commissioner Gist ~~has~~ received from numerous practitioner groups ~~over the past year~~, in particular from her monthly meetings with the executive committee of the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association, Commissioner Gist decided to use this transition opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about assessment and school accountability.

To meaningfully engage educators and to receive feedback and advice from educators regarding the use of state assessments for recognition, accountability, and support, last year (2014) Commissioner Gist convened a group of practitioners, consisting of 5 school superintendents, 1 head of a charter public school, an assistant superintendent, an assessment director, and a high-school principal. The group convened for four two-hour sessions:

**Meeting 1- February 24, 2014, 2 – 4 p.m.**

*Understanding the Landscape*

The first meeting will present the focus group with an overview of the opportunities and limitations of the ESEA submission and the accountability cycles that are affected in order to ensure that the group fully understood the current metrics used to classify schools and how each is impacted by the PARCC transition. We will also explain the feedback that we receive where there are connections between the metrics and other systems.

**Meeting 2- March 10, 2014, 3 – 5 p.m.**

*Presenting Current Thinking on Changes and Adjustments*

We will use focus-group members understand the recommendations deeply, raise questions, and offer and alternative recommendations.

**Meeting 3- March 24, 2014, 2 – 4 p.m.**

*Finalizing the Accountability System Adjustments*

The third meeting will be dedicated to finalizing the adjustments that were presented and discussed during the second meeting so that the application and workbook can be updated.

**Meeting 4- April 3, 2014, 2 – 4 p.m.**

*Accountability: Future State*

The final meeting will present the materials changes that RIDE planned to incorporate into the ESEA waiver extension request to the group, discuss how and why the decisions were made, and to confirm their agreement with the approach. We will also use this final meeting to begin a discussing how we would like to shape the next generation of accountability systems.

We are attaching to this request some of the materials we presented to the members of the focus group over the course of the four meetings.

~~RIDE provided public notice regarding this ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application through a series of notices in the Commissioner's Field Memo (see attached), which Commissioner Gist e-mails to all school districts and which RIDE posts weekly on the agency website.~~

See [Attachment 12](#):

Consultation – Rhode Island's ESEA Waiver (PowerPoint)

Rhode Island ESEA waiver (PowerPoint)

Field Memo 4-11-14 (Item 1)

Field Memo 4-18-14 (Item 3)

Field Memo 4-25-14 (Item 2)

Field Memo Alert 4-29-14

As a result of the meetings of these practitioners, Commissioner Gist accepted several recommendations for changes to the Rhode Island system for school classifications and accountability, ~~which are more fully described in the responding Principle sections of this renewal request.~~

For further review and input, Commissioner Gist and Deputy Commissioner Abbott scheduled two webinars to present these proposals to all educators and to members of the general public. Commissioner Gist invited participation in these webinars in her weekly communications to superintendents and to the education field:

As I noted to you in last week's Field Memo, we are in the process of developing our application for renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability in 2012. In renewing our

request, we intend to leave the accountability system largely unchanged, but we do have to make some changes because of our transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. We continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well.

Tuesday, April 29, [2014](#), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)  
Wednesday, April 30, [2014](#), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interesting in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community.

RIDE also ~~posts~~[posted](#) these [announcements](#) on the RIDE website.

In November 2014, to further review, refine, and improve the Rhode Island system of school recognition, accountability, and support, Commissioner Gist convened a working group of educators, Accountability 3.0, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner David V. Abbott. The purpose of the group was to “create the blueprint for our next-generation accountability system that will be based on the new PARCC assessments.” Commissioner Gist’s stated goal was to ensure that the redesign process would be “more iterative, with a broad range of participants.” \*Consult – Acc 3-0 initial letter 11-24-14

The working group convened on November 25, 2014, with 15 invited participants, including superintendents, a leader of a public charter school, 2 members of school committees, 2 principals, two representatives of the statewide teachers’ unions, a former Rhode Island Teacher of the Year, representatives of the State Special Education Advisory Committee and the State English Language Learners Advisory Committee, and a representative of postsecondary education. Although not all members attended all meetings, sign-in sheets show that typical meetings included 10 or more participants, often with follow-ups by email. \*Consult Acc 3-0 members

At its initial meeting, the working group discussed two white papers regarding the proposed examination of the Rhode Island accountability system. The group also adopted a sequence and timeline, extending through the submission of this flexibility request and through establishing PARCC baselines and cut scores in the summer of 2015. \*Consult Acc 3-0 work plan 12-17-14

Over a course of twice-monthly meetings, the working group developed guiding principles and began its analysis of metrics in the current accountability system (December 2014). In January, the group began developing the specific changes to the accountability system that we include in this flexibility request, for example:

- Absolute proficiency: discussed changing this measure to reflect credit for improvement even below the level of proficiency, through an indexing system;
- Gap closing: Major changes here, no longer looking at subgroups but rather at the bottom 25 percent of performers within a given school; this group is compared against the statewide performance;
- Growth metric (K-8): instead of looking at the median student in a school, this metric will analyze the share of a student population with growth scores below 35 SGP;
- And other topics. \*Consult Acc 3-0 workgroup 1-20-15

The working group continued to discuss these topics and others and to revise and refine its proposals, in preparation for submission of this request for flexibility under ESEA.

In February 2015, the working group prepared its list of the “characteristics of excellent schools,” which the group agreed could be used to inform decisions made regarding school improvement and transformation. \*Consult Acc 3-0 exc schools The group also reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding proposed metric changes to the system of recognition, accountability, and support. Following this meeting, RIDE prepared a first draft of Principle 2 of this flexibility request for review by the members of the working group.

A PowerPoint summarizing recommendations and agreements made to date was further refined, revised, and discussed at the meeting of March 9, 2015, \*Consult Acc 3-0 3-9-15 in preparation for full inclusion of the working-group recommendations in Principle 2 of this request for flexibility under ESEA. RIDE presented a final version of the report in a webinar for superintendents and other interested school leaders on March 27, 2015. \*Consult PPT 3-25-15

## **Support**

As described in this request, RIDE meets at least quarterly with leaders of each Focus and Priority school to develop, implement, and monitor plans for school transformation.

At the conclusion of each quarterly monitoring, RIDE formally and informally collects information from the monitored Focus and Priority schools and their districts. This feedback comes in the form of process debriefs, surveys, and focus groups facilitated by third parties. The information gathered during this process not only informed decisions made regarding the monitoring process as it appears in this request, but also more broadly informed decisions regarding many of the improvements proposed throughout the request.

In order to get more detailed feedback from leaders in school districts with Focus and Priority schools on the support RIDE provides to schools in the process of transformation, RIDE contracted with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute to run a focus group among school leaders. (The U.S. Department of Education Reform Support Network supported this process.) The meeting of the focus group took place on

December 4, 2014. The participating superintendents or their designees provided reactions and suggestions regarding support they were receiving from the RIDE Office of Transformation. The discussion led to some specific recommendations, particularly regarding the timelines and the criteria for exit from Focus and Priority status. This feedback helped guide some of the refinements RIDE has made in this request for flexibility regarding support for Focus and Priority schools in transformation. Superintendents or their designees from all LEAs with Focus or Priority schools attended the meeting of the focus group, with the exception of one single-school LEA, which received by email the questions presented to the group. \*Consult – District Superintendent Focus Group 12-17-14

### **Principle 3 – Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership**

Since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request on May 23, 2012, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) has been meaningfully engaged with educators in Rhode Island to ensure that LEAs are implementing evaluation and support systems that meet the standards that the Rhode Island Board of Education has approved. Here is a summary of the highlights of our outreach and consultation efforts regarding educator evaluations:

**State-wide Surveys:** Twice a year, at mid-year and at the end of the school year, we have administered statewide surveys designed to collect feedback on the implementation of the evaluation systems for teachers, support professionals, building administrators, and central office administrators. Approximately 4,260 teachers, 1,360 support professionals, 300 building administrators, and 125 central office administrators completed the most recent mid-year survey.

**Superintendent Regional Meetings:** The RIDE educator-evaluation team facilitates annual regional meetings for superintendents. These meetings serve as an opportunity for RIDE and teams of superintendents to discuss the evaluation work in smaller group settings and to review the evaluation data. The most recent round of regional meetings was conducted in the late summer and early fall of 2013.

**Student Learning Objective (SLO) Regional Meetings:** In the fall of 2012, the RIDE evaluation team hosted 2 SLO Peer Review and Support Sessions for educators across the state. SLOs are the most heavily weighted element in our evaluation system. These meetings provided an opportunity for teachers and administrators to bring their SLOs and experience to a RIDE-facilitated workshop that allowed teachers and administrators to hone their ability to review SLOs, determine if the three main criteria were approvable or needed revision, and to craft feedback. RIDE recorded a webinar of this session for use by districts in supporting the SLO process.

**Educator Workgroups:** RIDE has convened two distinct educator workgroups: special educators (during the 2012-13 school year), and support professionals

(ongoing). One focus area for these groups is the use of student learning measures in evaluation. The participants review current policies and samples, provide feedback, develop and critique new samples in order to improve the process for these educators. There is also a group of teachers of the arts who meet regularly with members of the evaluation team. These arts educators received a grant to develop a strong SLO process for arts educators and have collaborated closely with RIDE staff. RIDE also convened four support professionals' focus groups during February 2014.

**Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) Focus Groups:** In the spring of 2013, RIDE convened through focus groups to collect feedback and recommendations. 15 educators, representing 12 LEAs participated in the EPSS focus groups. The feedback from these focus groups had a significant impact on the changes and improvements made to the system prior to the current school year.

**Educator Quality Mailbox:** The evaluation team monitors e-mails that are sent in from educators throughout the state. We provide direct responses to everyone who emails a question or comment regarding educator evaluations.

**Network Meetings:** RIDE facilitates monthly meeting with assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, and leaders of charter public schools. Educator evaluation is a consistent topic at these meetings.

**Presentations for professional groups:** Members of the evaluation team have attended a variety of meetings and conferences for professional associations. (e.g., Rhode Island Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Rhode Island Association of School Principals, Rhode Island School Counselors Association, Association of Rhode Island Administrators of Special Education, Rhode Island Art Educators, Rhode Island Music Educators, Rhode Island School Superintendents Association).

**Commissioner Gist's meetings with teachers during school visits:** Commissioner Gist regularly visits schools across Rhode Island, and on each visit she schedules an afterschool meeting with teachers. At virtually every one of these meetings, educator evaluations was a dominant topic or the dominant topic of concern. Commissioner Gist uses these meetings to get direct input from educators and to respond to questions, concerns, and inquiries about the educator-evaluation system in Rhode Island. ~~Over the past 14 months, Commissioner Gist has held 25 on-site meetings with teachers and 2 on-site meetings with school leaders.~~

~~As a result of feedback from these initiatives and events, RIDE has announced two significant changes to the educator evaluation system since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request.~~

On May 17, 2013, Commissioner Gist [announced](#) that after meeting with the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association and the Rhode Island Association of School Principals, RIDE agreed to implement a “differentiated evaluations” system for all LEAs using the Rhode Island Model of evaluations. After further discussions with union leaders from the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP), on August 9, 2013, Commissioner Gist announced that the six “innovation districts,” all of which are RIFTHP districts, would also be able to employ the differentiated evaluation system. The differentiated evaluation system is a response to concerns from educators about the time demands regarding the number of classroom observations of practices; under the differentiated system, teachers with evaluations of effective or highly effective could undergo fewer observations.

On August 23, 2013, Commissioner Gist announced another significant revision to the evaluation system, subject to review by the U.S. Department of Education:

...[B]ased on feedback that I have received from teachers, principals, and superintendents regarding the implementation of educator evaluations, we have determined that it is in the best interest of our schools, our principals, our teachers, and our students to modify the way we will use the Growth Model as a component of educator evaluations.

At this time, we have decided not to use the Growth Model as an element in determining the summative evaluation ratings for the purposes of personnel decisions for teachers and principals.

The Growth Model data that we now have available, however, will provide a critical piece of information that teachers and school and district leaders will use to improve teaching and learning. For example, teachers and school and district leaders will use data from the Growth Model for development of professional learning plans, for professional development, and to develop a deeper understanding of student growth and of professional practices. ...

In future years, we will use the Growth Model as a factor in determining summative evaluation ratings.

See [Attachment 12](#):  
Field Memo 5-17-13 (Item 1)  
Field Memo 3-14-14 (Item 3)

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Rhode Island Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist maintains a strong commitment to engaging stakeholders in the SEA meaningfully development and implementation of policies and initiatives. In keeping with that commitment, the R.I. Department of Education has engaged in and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request in 2012 and throughout the preparation of this application for renewal of the Request.

### **Principle 1 – College- and Career-Ready Expectations**

In order to ensure the successful transition to our new set of college- and career-ready expectations, the Common Core State Standards, the R.I. Department of Education recognized the importance of meaningfully engaging and seeking input from students, parents, community-based organizations, ~~civil rights organizations, organizations representing~~ and other constituencies. To that end, the R.I. Department of Education sought educators who would volunteer to serve as “Common Core Ambassadors,” leading forums on the Common Core State Standards in LEAs and other public settings across the state. The 18 educators selected as Common Core Ambassadors represented a broad constituency of the education field in Rhode Island, including a superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals, reading specialists, mathematics teachers, reading and literacy specialists, a director of special education, an ESL director, and others. Thanks to a generous grant from the GE Foundation, RIDE was able to pay each ambassador a \$4,000 stipend for their work (though some declined to accept the stipend).

The primary function of the ambassadors was to lead community forums, at which they explained to the public at large the importance of setting high expectations for our students ~~with disabilities and~~ and the fundamental facts about the Common Core State Standards. The ambassadors led a total of 29 Common Core forums. Most of these forums were arranged in partnership with local school districts; one forum was in partnership with the East Providence Special Education Parents Advisory Network. One forum, for our most remote, island-based community, was held as a webinar.

Along with our traditional communications strategies – including weekly updates to the field, as well as use of social media (including a dedicated Facebook page for the Rhode Island Common Core initiative), Rhode Island has received and continues to receive feedback, commentary, and inquiries from the education field and from the general public regarding transition to the Common Core. Because Rhode Island has fully transitioned to the Common Core, the feedback and commentary has not led to any significant change since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request (May 2012) in our use of college- and career-ready expectations, but the public outreach has enable us to engage a many Rhode Islanders from a wide range of constituencies in an ongoing conversation about this topic.

See Attachment 13:  
Common Core Grant – RI.  
March Draft Minutes

## **Principle 2 - Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

Last year, RIDE sent to all media a notice inviting the media and the public at large to participate in either of two RIDE webinars on ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application:

### **RIDE schedules webinars on proposed changes to classification system**

The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) is completing the process of developing an application for renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, under which, in 2012, the U.S. Department of Education allowed RIDE to implement the current system of school classifications and accountability.

As a part of our regularly scheduled meeting cycles with districts that have identified Priority or Focus schools, RIDE consulted with superintendents and chief transformation officers about our ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application, particularly on topics affecting identified schools. Specifically, we consulted with East Providence, Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket. RIDE also developed a PowerPoint (attached) on our renewal application and presented it at a public meeting of Rhode Island Board of Education.

In meetings with the ELL Advisory Committee and Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee (RISEAC) over the past two years, RIDE has asked both groups if they had questions or concerns about request for flexibility and the request for renewal of the ESEA waiver, and there were no questions or comments. RIDE informed both groups that RIDE would be happy to schedule a separate briefing for each group if the leadership of each committee felt it would be necessary, upon review of the red-lined version the requests. Below is a schedule of the meetings with these advisory committees at which RIDE discussed the ESEA Flexibility Request:

### **RISEAC**

February 3, 2014 . RISEAC Leadership Team. Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application.

February 27, 2014 . RISEAC full committee. Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application. (See attached RISEAC Director Rept.)

March 20, 2014. RISEAC full committee. Presentations on Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments. (See March Draft Minutes.)

Meeting of March 19, 2015 See attachment: **\*Consult RISEAC PPT 3-19-15]**

### **ELL Advisory**

February 6, 2014. ELL Advisory Committee Leadership Team. . Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application.

February 27, 2014. ELL Advisory Committee full committee. Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application and presentation on Common Core State Standards Implications for **English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes-learners.**

Rhode Island Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist maintains a strong commitment to engaging stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives. In keeping with that commitment, the R.I. Department of Education has engaged in and solicited input from diverse communities since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request in 2012 and throughout the preparation of this application for renewal of the Request.

### **Principle 1 – College and Career-Ready Expectations**

In order to ensure a successful transition to our new set of college- and career-ready expectations, the Common Core State Standards, the R.I. Department of Education recognized the importance of meaningfully engaging and seeking input from students, parents, community-based organizations, and other constituencies. To that end, the R.I. Department of Education sought educators who would volunteer to serve as “Common Core Ambassadors,” leading forums on the Common Core State Standards in LEAs and other public settings across the state. The 18 educators selected as Common Core Ambassadors represent a broad constituency of the education field in Rhode Island, including a superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals, reading specialists, mathematics teachers, reading and literacy specialists, a director of special education, an ESL director, and others. Thanks to a generous grant from the GE Foundation, RIDE was able to pay each ambassador a \$4,000 stipend for their work (though some declined to accept the stipend).

The primary function of the ambassadors has been to lead community forums, at which they explain to the public at large the importance of setting high expectations for our students and the fundamental facts about the Common Core State Standards. As of this writing, the ambassadors have led a total of 27 Common Core forums, with two more scheduled for this school year. Most of these forums have been arranged in partnership with local school districts; one forum was in partnership with the East Providence Special Education Parents Advisory Network. One forum, for our most remote, island-based community, is scheduled to be held as a webinar. As RIDE has not yet expended the full amount of the grant, we are seeking approval to use outstanding funds to continue with Common Core forums through at least the first half of the coming school year.

Along with our traditional communications strategies — including weekly updates to the field, as well as use of social media (including a dedicated Facebook page for the Rhode Island Common Core initiative), Rhode Island has received and continues to receive feedback, commentary, and inquiries from the education field and from the general public regarding transition to the Common Core. Because Rhode Island has fully transitioned to the Common Core as of beginning of the current school year, the feedback and commentary has not led to any significant

change since the initial approval of the Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility Request (May 2012) in our use of college- and career-ready expectations, but the public outreach has enable us to engage a many Rhode Islanders from a wide range of constituencies in an ongoing conversation about this topic. Our Common Core Ambassadors have also been able to allay some concerns and refute some misconceptions about the Common Core State Standards in Rhode Island.

See attachment 13:  
Common Core Grant—RI.  
March Draft Minutes

## **Principle 2 - Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

RIDE sent to all media a notice inviting the media and the public at large to participate in either of two RIDE webinars on ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application:

### **RIDE schedules webinars on proposed changes to classification system**

The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) is completing the process of developing an application for renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, under which, in 2012, the U.S. Department of Education allowed RIDE to implement the current system of school classifications and accountability. Under this system, RIDE classifies schools based on:

- **Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?
- **Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?
- **Participation:** How many students take the state assessments?
- **Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners?
- **Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?
- **Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?
- **Improvement (high schools):** Is the school improving annually?
- **Graduation (high schools):** Is the school reaching its graduation-rate goals?

Using these measures, RIDE places each school into one of six classifications: Commended, Leading, Typical, Warning, Focus, or Priority.

Overall, RIDE intends to leave the classifications and accountability system largely unchanged, but RIDE does have to make some technical changes because of the transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. RIDE continues to seek input on the renewal application, and to that end RIDE has scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- ~~Tuesday (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)~~
- ~~Wednesday (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)~~

~~(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.) All are invited to join either webinar.~~

~~As a part of our regularly scheduled meeting cycles with districts that have identified Priority or Focus schools, RIDE consulted with superintendents and chief transformation officers about our ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application, particularly on topics affecting identified schools. Specifically, we consulted with East Providence, Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket. RIDE also developed a PowerPoint (attached) on our renewal application and presented it at a public meeting of Rhode Island Board of Education.~~

~~RIDE announced at the March 2013 meetings of the ELL Advisory Committee and Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee (RISEAC) that RIDE would be posting a red-lined version of the ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application shortly and that RIDE would appreciate input from both advisory committees. The RIDE team noted that there would be no significant changes in the areas that both advisory committees expressed concern about regarding the initial flexibility request in 2012, regarding the combining of performance for English-language learners and students with disabilities in the accountability measures. RIDE asked both groups if they had questions at the time of the meeting, and there were no questions or comments. RIDE informed both groups that RIDE would be happy to schedule a separate briefing for each group if the leadership of each committee felt it would be necessary, upon review of the red-lined version. Below is a schedule of the meetings with these advisory committees at which RIDE discussed the ESEA Flexibility Request:~~

### ~~RISEAC~~

~~February 3, 2014. RISEAC Leadership Team. Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application.~~

~~February 27, 2014. RISEAC full committee. Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application. (See attached RISEAC Director Rept.)~~

~~March 20, 2014. RISEAC full committee. Presentations on Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments. (See March Draft Minutes.)~~

### ~~ELL Advisory~~

~~February 6, 2014. ELL Advisory Committee Leadership Team. . Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application.~~

~~February 27, 2014. ELL Advisory Committee full committee. Announcement of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application and presentation on Common Core State Standards Implications for English learners.~~

See Attachment 13:  
February RISEAC Director Report  
ESEA classifications—webinar—advisory  
ESEA Flex Request Renewal (webinar PowerPoint)

See Attachment 13:  
February RISEAC Director Report  
ESEA classifications – webinar – advisory  
ESEA Flex Request Renewal (webinar PowerPoint)

RIDE sought additional feedback on its accountability process from a network of new school leaders trained through the Academy of Transformative Leadership. These leaders provided valuable school-level perspectives and experiences with the accountability system in the context of transformative leadership.

## Evaluation

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the

### Overview of SEA's Request for ESEA Flexibility

implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your

### Overview of SEA's Request for ESEA Flexibility

request for the flexibility is approved.

- Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:
1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
  2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

~~Under the leadership and vision of Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist, in 2009 the~~The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) ~~developed a comprehensive and coherent~~ strategic plan, [Transforming Education in Rhode Island](#) (~~RIDE Strategic Plan~~), which ~~formed the foundation for our successful Race to the Top application and which,~~ guides us as we work toward increasing the quality of instruction and improving student achievement in our state. Our strategic plan is based on the following theory of action:

- all students will achieve at high levels when we have an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school; and
- ~~Our~~our teachers and school leaders will be most effective when they receive consistent and ~~effectivesufficient~~ support and work within a system of policies and resources that is based on student needs.

~~Rhode Island has taken major steps toward this vision~~  
~~One~~ of ~~success by implementing college- and career-ready expectations for all students, including adopting world-class standards and training to date more than 3,000 Rhode Island teachers regarding implementation of these standards. This commitment to providing direct support to teachers and administrators to ensure universal access to rigorous, standards-based instruction forms the backbone of our drive to improve student achievement. We are also fully engaged in supporting effective instruction and leadership, primarily through the implementation across the entire state of educator evaluations based on multiple measures, including measures of student growth and achievement. At present we are seeking no additional flexibility regarding these two initiatives.~~  
priorities

~~The~~third element of our efforts to increase the quality of instruction and to improve student achievement, which we describe in our strategic plan as “accelerating all schools toward greatness,” is the area in which we are requesting flexibility under the provisions of ESEA. We at the Rhode Island Department of Education (“RIDE”) have known for some time that our current NCLB accountability which includes our system allows too many of our schools to escape accountability for low-incidence populations, including English Learners and many of our racial and ethnic sub-populations. It is therefore not surprising that Rhode Island suffers from significant achievement gaps among student sub-populations. We began our work on this waiver application with an unflinching commitment to create a system of expectations, measurement, and accountability that would reveal these gaps wherever they exist and to use data about individual sub-group performance to drive meaningful and of differentiated supports and interventions.

We have been bold in our efforts. RIDE has lowered the “n” size from 45 to 20, which we feel is the smallest number from which we can draw reasonable inferences about common needs within the cohort. We have derived consolidated subgroups that best serve to maximize accountability for our lowest incidence populations. For example, we did significant outreach to our English Learner and SPED advocacy communities to win their support for a consolidated subgroup of ELs and students with IEPs. We were able to win their support by demonstrating that combining the two subgroups raised the

~~number of schools held accountable for their English Learners from 54 to 227 in the first year of the approved waiver implementation. Coupled with RIDE's commitment to using only disaggregated data to drive differentiated supports and interventions, it is this relentless pursuit of the truth that has won broad support within our state for this ambitious plan for expanded accountability.~~

~~During the drafting, discussion, and revision stage of RIDE's ESEA waiver application, we worked closely with representatives of English Learners and special education students and educators. In those discussions, we were unambiguous in our commitment to ensure that the consolidation of subpopulations for accountability in no way indicates the appropriateness of consolidation for instructional groupings. In the period of the waiver implementation, the consolidation of the subpopulation for accountability purposes has served its intended purpose: dramatically heightened accountability for subpopulation services in Rhode Island schools. Beyond that, we have seen no evidence of its inappropriate extension to instructional groups. Nonetheless, RIDE remains vigilant in ensuring that there is no classroom, school, or district-level misunderstanding of the meaning of consolidated subpopulations within RIDE's ESEA waiver.~~

~~As described in further detail under Principle 2 of this request, we hope to build upon our current state system of differentiated accountability, recognition, accountability, and support in order to develop a and support. Under our current approved request for flexibility, we have successfully implemented for the past three years an accountability system that:~~

- ~~• focuses on closing achievement gaps;~~
- ~~• identifies specific shortcomings and achievements at each school, rather than classifying schools as either making progress or in need of improvement;~~
- ~~• enables us to provide each school with the specific support or intervention needed to improve student achievement, rather than restricting us to a rigid set of intervention options; and,~~
- ~~• provides schools and districts with the ability to select bold and empirically proven interventions that respond to their context and their needs.~~

~~Rhode Island is proposing a classification and accountability system that evaluates schools on a wide array of measures so as to produce a detailed and multi-dimensional picture of school performance. Our accountability system consists of three distinct stages. In Stage 1, schools are assigned AMO's by disaggregated sub-population in accordance with "Option A" of the waiver application. Schools and districts are held accountable for reaching these discrete targets, Failure to meet AMO's in consecutive years leads to state interventions. Stage 2 uses a multitude of measures derived from our state assessment system to measure the overall performance of the school. Through the use of lower "n" sizes and consolidated sub-groups, Rhode Island is able to hold 98% of its schools accountable for sub-group performance! This level of inclusion means that virtually all schools in Rhode Island are fully included in an accountability system that measures the performance of all students. The broad measures for which schools are held accountable include percent proficient for the school as a whole and~~

for all student groups, percent proficient with distinction, growth over time, closing of achievement gaps, and graduation rates. This detailed information will allow us more accurately to determine which of our schools are in greatest need of support (Priority and Focus Schools), as well as which are our beacons of success (Reward Schools).

Once schools' overall performance is measured, our system moves to Stage 3, which we refer to as the "diagnostic" stage. At this point, data is again disaggregated so that both we and the school can take a closer look at how individual students are actually performing within those schools whose overall performance earned them low scores in Stage 2. In other words, we set and measure AMO's at the disaggregated level. We then use consolidated sub-groups to help us measure overall school performance in an inclusive and equitable manner. Finally, once we are ready to engage in diagnosis and treatment, we return to granular data unconstrained by limits of "n" size. This level of detail, along with the vast amount of data accessible in our RIDE Data Warehouse, will inform a much more nuanced and diagnostic approach to working with districts to accelerate their schools toward greatness. Time after time, we have found that it is a school's inability to execute high-quality instruction with fidelity and consistency that prevents meaningful, sustained improvements.

RIDE has had a history of intervention in low-achieving schools, based on provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act and on state law. Our experience to date has been that interventions lead to an improved school climate and to short-term gains in student achievement, which schools have often been unable to sustain over time. We therefore propose under Principle 2 of this request an intervention system that establishes for each identified school a multi-year intervention plan that schools will implement in three stages:

1. diagnosis and planning (6 months);
2. implementation of the plan and progress monitoring (up to 3 years); and
3. transition to monitoring of outcome data or modification of the intervention, possibly leading to reconstitution, restart, or closure.

Our goal is to ensure that these intervention plans are responsive to the specific needs of each identified school and that they lead to improvements in instruction and achievement that schools can sustain over time. Based on our continued work with educators in the field as well as with other friends of education across Rhode Island, as described in the Consultation section of this request, we have identified several areas for potential improvement in our accountability system. In requesting renewal of our approved ESEA flexibility, we are proposing several changes to our system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, as we will describe in greater detail in this request, particularly in the section on Principle 2.

Our overall goal is to maintain an accountability system that:

- is diagnostic and supportive;
- is transparent and trustworthy;

- values absolute performance as well as growth;
- emphasizes equity among all student groups; and
- recognizes challenges in educational environments.

To that end, we are requesting revisions in several elements of our accountability system, the most significant of which concern:

**Proficiency:** Instead of receiving points or credit for percentages of students attaining proficiency and percentages of students attaining distinction, schools would receive varying amounts of credit for the percentage of students at each level of proficiency, allowing us to recognize schools whose students move out of the lowest level of performance. In addition, schools will receive additional credit for improving achievement levels of students facing additional learning challenges (students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students).

**Closing Achievement Gaps:** Schools would receive credit for closing the achievement gap between the lowest-achieving quartile in the school and the top 50 percent of student achievement in the school (or, if the school achievement as a whole is especially low, the top 50 percent of achievement in Rhode Island). This requested change would help alleviate the problem of many schools still not being held accountable for gap-closing for various students groups because of low “n-sizes.” It would also respond to concerns educators and others have raised regarding “blaming” various student groups for low school achievement – rather than focusing on the achievement and growth of all students. Additionally, it would respond to concerns about schools that may have “closed” achievement gaps only because of an overall decline in student performance in the reference group.

**Growth:** Rather than maintain our focus on the median growth of all students and of various identified student groups, our request would allow us to focus on the growth of students who are at a growth-percentile lower than 35 (i.e., 65 percent of students or more have made greater growth over the past academic year). Students below the 35<sup>th</sup> growth percentile are those most likely to lose academic ground over time.

Along with these proposed changes, it is important to note that we will continue to use graduation rates and participation rates as key components in our system of accountability and, most important, that we will continue to calculate and publicly report AMO targets and progress toward those targets for all student groups. Schools that fail to meet any AMO target for three consecutive years will receive an “alert” as part of their classification and will be ineligible for either of our highest classifications, Commended and Leading.

The modifications we propose will link intervention plans directly to the goals of our strategic plan, as well as to the many systemic supports developed through our Race to the Top grant. RIDE will work with districts and schools to design, implement, and monitor plans that ensure educator excellence are proposing in each school and that

~~provide teachers and leaders with the support they need to improve instruction and to advance student achievement — be it training, curriculum resources, data systems, technology, assistance regarding specific student populations, targeted aid as appropriate, or guidance on achieving efficiencies.~~

~~The waivers Rhode Island seeks~~this request for renewal of ESEA flexibility are relatively minor, but of critical importance. ~~Adding the concept of multiple measures to our system of school accountability will provide educators and decision makers with significantly more accurate pictures of school performance. Heretofore overlooked performance of low-incidence populations will be highlighted. We will have more detailed information about student growth and schools' ability to close achievement gaps among groups of students. We~~With approval of this request, we will have clearer pictures of how schools are improving over time and we will be able to more accurately measure gains of students who are approaching, but have not yet achieved proficiency on our state assessments. Most ~~importantly~~important, our continued use of sophisticated diagnostic tools will provide better information regarding what individual schools need to focus on in the short term to improve teaching and learning. We are confident that our request is responsive to the needs of our schools, supportive of our teachers and school leaders, and in the best interest of the students of Rhode Island.

## Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations

### 1.A Adopt College- and Career-Ready Standards

#### Option A

The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.

~~i.~~i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)

#### Option B

The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.

~~i.~~i.1. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)

~~i.~~i.2. \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

## 1.B Transition to College and Career Ready Standards

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option.

### The Common Core and the Rhode Island Theory of Action

#### Overview

~~The~~For the past five years Rhode Island has been working towards its central goal of our strategic plan, [Transforming Education in Rhode Island](#), ~~is~~ to ensure that all Rhode Island students are ready for success in college, careers, and life. Although we are in the process of development of a new strategic plan, our goal of ensuring success in college, careers, and life for all Rhode Island students remains. We have made gains towards this goal and in doing so, have learned a great deal about the role of the state agency and our necessary partnership with school districts. Our theory of action is based on the premise that our teachers and school leaders will be most effective when they receive consistent and effective support and work within a system of policies and resources that is based on student needs. ~~The commitment we made in our strategic plan~~Our work transitioning to “~~establish world-class standards and assessments~~” ~~is a critical priority in providing this support to our educators.~~ *Transforming Education in Rhode Island* ~~demonstrates our commitment not only to adopting~~ the Common Core ~~State Standards, but also to~~ state standards designing and implementing “appropriate professional development to ensure that teachers and teacher leaders” understand the Common Core and use it to inform instruction, assessment, and curriculum. ~~demonstrates our commitment.~~ We have learned through experience that the fidelity of execution at the classroom level is the critical lever needed to actually improve instruction and to raise student achievement. Full implementation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned with a comprehensive assessment system that is available to every student must be the jointly-held goal of the state and each of its Local Education Agencies. Finally, an effective instructional system requires a systematic problem-solving approach that provides student-centered, data-driven supports and interventions to identify and address gaps in student performance against the measurable expectations of the guaranteed and viable curriculum.

## Background

Rhode Island was one of the first states to adopt the Common Core. We are a member of the Common Core Standards Initiative, a project directed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) ~~and supported by a coalition of 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia.~~ The Common Core State Standards Initiative has developed content standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12 that are envisioned as a first step toward national education reform.

Our past practice in Rhode Island clearly demonstrates our solid commitment to ~~common content standards,~~ working through ~~our participation in~~ multi-state consortia, including leadership roles in:

*New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP):* Rhode Island is a founding member of NECAP. NECAP is the only operational multi-state consortium that developed internationally benchmarked common content standards and an operational common assessment in the multiple grades required by NCLB. The states involved in NECAP are committed to continuing their work together with the Common Core.

*World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium:* Rhode Island is also a member of WIDA, a 35-state consortium dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards, valid and reliable assessments, and equitable educational opportunities for English Learners. As an early member of this consortium, Rhode Island was one of the first states to adopt the WIDA English-language proficiency standards for all grades and core-content areas.

We have further demonstrated our long-standing commitment to common standards through our active role in participating in and providing feedback during the development of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). We are pleased that the Common Core reflects similar expectations of rigor and ~~close~~ some alignment with our current state content standards, and we are pleased that the Common Core and our current state standards show the same commitment to college- and career-readiness.

## Adopting the Common Core

Before presenting the Common Core to the R.I. Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (Board of Regents) for approval, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) established a Common Core Engagement Committee, made up of representatives from the Governor's Office, the Office of Higher Education, and the Department of Labor and Training, and RIDE. ~~The committee was convened~~ to review the standards and to provide feedback in order to ensure ~~the~~ their seamless adoption of and transition ~~to the Common Core State Standards.~~ In addition, throughout the drafting process, ~~we at~~ RIDE used engaged our state content specialists ~~to engage~~ our and district-level and higher-education content ~~leadership~~ committees, ~~including~~

~~teachers and principals, in reviewing and providing to provide~~ feedback on the Common Core.

Upon the release of the CCSS, RIDE began a process of examining the standards to ensure that these standards maintain the high expectations that we have set for our students ~~through our current standards, the GLEs (Grade-Level Expectations) and GSEs (Grade-Span Expectations).~~ Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist presented this information to the Board of Regents on June 17 and June 24, 2010. RIDE also described its detailed implementation plan to ensure that all schools are fully implementing a curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core standards prior to the first assessment based on the Common Core standards, during the 2014-15 school year.

On July 1, 2010, the Board of Regents voted unanimously to “Adopt the *Common Core State Standards*, as presented.”

For evidence of this adoption, view the minutes from [Board of Regents July 1, 2010 meeting](#).

In order to establish a consistent set of standards for birth through grade twelve, Rhode Island ~~will be aligning~~aligned the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards with the Common Core. The Early Learning and Development Standards, adopted May 2013, articulate comprehensive educational expectations for children from birth to five years of age. As a winner of a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, Rhode Island ~~will develop~~developed high-quality professional development and assessments to support instruction in early learning.

### ***Timeline for ~~transition~~Transition to the Common Core***

The transition to curriculum and instruction that is fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards ~~will occur~~occurred over several years, with the expectation of full implementation ~~by~~in the 2013-14 school year.

Beginning ~~with our~~ July 2010, ~~when Rhode Island adopted~~ adoption of the Common Core, Rhode Island initiated the awareness phase of its transition to the CCSS. In this phase, RIDE began outreach on the standards and began developing and sharing resources to build statewide awareness ~~of the adoption of the standards and what that means for stakeholders. As we approached the current (2011-12) school year, RIDE initiated the transition phase of its plan. Throughout the next (2012-13) school year, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will be transitioning to instruction aligned with the CCSS. Our RTTT “Study of the Standards” initiative has greatly facilitated this initiative. During this transition phase (up to the fall of 2013, one year prior to the first state assessments based on the Common Core), RIDE will provide~~ and understanding of the standards. During the period spanning 2011- 2013, the state embarked upon aggressive transition. This transition period involved all LEAS and included a RTT-

funded “Study of the Standards”. The transition period also included statewide professional development, assessment and instructional support systems, professional development and resources to districts in order to support educators across the state in their transition to the Common Core.

The strategy for transition to the Common Core ~~includes~~included:

- training (professional development) for educators (teachers and school leaders);
- development of instructional materials and curriculum;
- provision of student supports; and
- a detailed timeline to support LEA planning.

### Comparing the Common Core with ~~Current~~Previous Standards

#### Overview

~~Our existing Rhode Island’s previous standards in Rhode Island~~ (Grade Level Expectations and Grade Span Expectations, or GLEs and GSEs) for mathematics, reading, and written/oral communication are comparable in scope, sequencing, and rigor to Common Core. The Common Core includes rigorous expectations, robust content, and relevant, real-world skills. ~~By adopting these standards, Rhode Island is~~Due to our decade-long experience designing and administering large-scale assessments through multi-state consortia, Rhode Island was positioned to work with other states on collaborative curriculum and assessment initiatives, such as the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers), ~~which will replace the current state assessment (NEGAP) in 2014-15 for reading~~ and mathematics, the National Center and ~~the new~~State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment for students with severe disabilities, ~~which will replace the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment~~.

After Rhode Island adopted the Common Core, RIDE further studied the alignment between the two sets of standards – the ~~current~~previous standards (GLEs and GSEs) and the Common Core. RIDE quickly learned that structural differences between the two sets of standards would make a crosswalk document complex and not likely to be useful. Our ~~analysts~~analyses determined that there was not a direct standard-to-standard link between the GLEs/GSEs and the Common Core. Rather, component elements of the GLEs/GSEs mapped fairly precisely to component elements of the Common Core standards. RIDE accordingly developed resources that identified the structure and focus of the Common Core, and RIDE identified the major shifts from the GLEs and GSEs to the Common Core. These resources ~~underscore~~underscored our belief that educators must study the standards and develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned with the Common Core. We ~~understand~~understood that full transition to instruction and assessment aligned with the Common Core is a process that can be managed only by well-informed and fully supported teachers and administrators. To that

end, RIDE ~~has~~ developed and distributed comparative overviews of our current state standards in [ELA](#) and [Math](#) and the Common Core.

### ***Adapting current assessments to the Common Core***

Upon adoption of the Common Core, the four NECAP states conducted a comparison of the GLEs/GSEs and the CCSS. This comparison included analysis by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment and the content specialists from the NECAP states, in collaboration with the NECAP assessment contractor, of the two sets of standards. The collective goal of the NECAP states was to create a transition strategy that would be fair to educators and students and that would maintain the quality of the information that the tests provide. The assessment specialists and content specialists from the NECAP states, as well as the NECAP assessment contractors and the NECAP Technical Advisory Committee, reviewed the resulting plan for transitioning from NECAP to CCSS.

Over the course of the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, districts across the four NECAP states ~~are transitioning~~[transitioned](#) to the Common Core State Standards. Although the pace and sequencing of changes to curriculum and instruction ~~vary~~[varied](#) across districts and schools within and across the NECAP states, all four states ~~expect~~[expected](#) districts and schools to be prepared to fully implement the Common Core State Standards during the 2013-14 school year.

During the transition period, the NECAP reading, writing, and mathematics tests ~~will continue~~[continued](#) to be administered in the fall of 2012 and 2013 and ~~will remain~~[remained](#) aligned with the ~~current~~[previous](#) standards (GLEs and GSEs).

~~Here are the~~[The](#) highlights of the transition plan [stipulated](#):

- there ~~will be~~[were](#) no changes to the GLEs/GSEs assessed on the NECAP reading, mathematics, and writing tests in the fall of 2012;
- there ~~will be~~[were](#) no changes to the GLEs/GSEs assessed on the NECAP reading and writing tests in the fall of 2013;
- there ~~will be~~[were](#) some changes to the GLEs assessed on the NECAP mathematics tests in the fall of 2013; and
- there ~~are~~[were](#) no changes to the GSEs assessed on the Grade 11 NECAP mathematics tests in the fall of 2013.

In addition, RIDE developed a transition plan that ~~outlines the role and schedule of the current state assessment and~~[outlined](#) all planned changes [to the NECAP state assessment](#) during the transition to the Common Core.

## Transition to the Common Core

### Overview

The Rhode Island plan to support the implementation of the Common Core Standards builds on a strong foundation established through regulation and practice. [The Rhode Island Basic Education Program](#) (BEP) regulations set forth the basic level of academic and support programs required in each Local Education Agency (LEA). The BEP requires that all LEAs implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum with an aligned comprehensive assessment system that includes formative, interim, and summative evaluations of all students in each core content area. In addition, the BEP requires that LEAs use a problem-solving approach to provide student-centered, data-driven supports and interventions that build upon the foundation of the guaranteed and viable curriculum. This approach must be comprehensive and systematic, and it must provide students with a full continuum of universal, targeted, and intensive supports that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, research-based, and designed to respond to student needs. The assessment and instructional support systems, professional development and resources that we ~~are building~~built and ~~providing~~continue to provide to districts are designed to support educators across the state in their transition to the Common Core.

The Rhode Island transition plan for the implementation of high-quality standards ~~target~~targeted professional development and resources for educators at differing levels of intensity. Our plan also ~~matches~~matched professional development and resources with LEA need and capacity. RIDE ~~contracts~~contracted with The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin (The Dana Center) to ensure that LEAs ~~are~~were able to develop and deliver curriculum aligned with the Common Core standards.- RIDE also worked with the WIDA and NECAP Consortiums and with the Rhode Island Response to Intervention Initiative to provide district leaders, principals, and teachers with professional development that ~~will help~~helped educators to use state and local assessment data to inform decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. This work both ~~informs~~informed and ~~support~~supported our transition to the Common Core and PARCC assessments. We designed each component of the Rhode Island transition plan to implement standards so that all elements of the plan ~~work~~worked together to drive changes in the daily instructional cycle ~~that takes place~~ in every classroom in Rhode Island.

To achieve this goal, RIDE began by conducting broad outreach to build awareness and support for the Common Core. Following this outreach, we developed resources and professional-development opportunities to build LEA capacity in four target areas:

- 1. supporting all educators as they work to understand the standards;
- 2. providing intensive support for curriculum alignment and resource development in targeted LEAs;
- 3. building a comprehensive assessment system; and

- 4. providing access to and professional development in the use of data to drive instructional decision-making.

The Common Core standards will drive greater student achievement only to the degree that all teachers and principals understand the standards and have aligned curriculum, instructional strategies, and resources to teach our students effectively. RIDE ~~makes~~made resources and systems of support available to all LEAs through ~~our instructional-management system. Through this system, Rhode Island's Instructional Support System (ISS). The ISS provides schools and teachers are able to access to~~ units of study ~~and local, instructional resources,~~ and state and local assessment data to support instruction. ~~This system is being phased out during the 2013-2014 school year and a new Instructional Support System will replace it to provide these resources. The new Instructional Support System will be implemented in~~The first of three phases ~~with the first phase being of ISS roll-out was~~ completed June 2014.- Through the integration of these supports, educators will deliver high-quality; differentiated, data-driven instruction aligned with the Common Core standards.

~~Consistent with the Rhode Island theory of action that teachers and school leaders will be most effective when they receive consistent and effective support and when they work within a system of policies and resources that is based on student needs,~~ our~~Island's~~ strategy for transition to the Common Core ~~calls~~called for developing teachers' capacity to deliver high-quality, differentiated, data-driven instruction aligned with standards and for giving teachers the tools they need to do so. ~~These tools must~~Tools like the ISS enable all educators to provide student-centered, data-driven supports and interventions to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English Learners, and low-achieving students. ~~With this principle in mind, we are designing Rhode Island's training that supports all educators in improving instruction. Because was developed with a complementary ethic, focusing on supporting principals and other leaders~~leaders' ability to set the culture for the school ~~and;~~ create the necessary context for effective teaching, ~~this strategy will also develop school and LEA leaders'; and accrue a deep~~ understanding ~~of the standards and~~ of the importance of the Common Core standards in guiding school-reform efforts.

To further support Rhode Island educators, RIDE ~~has~~ developed [timelines](#) and other resources on transition to the Common Core in Rhode Island.

## **Awareness**

### **Outreach on the Common Core**

Our first step in transitioning to the Common Core was to engage in broad outreach to stakeholders in order to build awareness of and support for the adoption of the CCSS. In addition to informal and formal presentations on the CCSS, RIDE developed informational materials targeted to various stakeholder groups, including teachers, administrators, members of the higher-education community, families, and community

members. We distributed these materials through various list-serves, and we posted the materials on the RIDE website.

Following the Board of Regents' adoption of the Common Core standards, RIDE sent copies of the standards to all LEAs in the state, and we posted the Common Core State Standards on our website for the public to access. We created implementation documents that illustrate the similarities and differences between the current standards and Common Core standards. We developed a detailed transition plan, which ~~includes~~including a timeline and strategies for implementing curriculum and for ensuring instructional alignment with the Common Core. This timeline also provides details on the transition to the new PARCC assessments, and the ~~timeline provides information regarding when we will begin to use the~~incremental introduction of PARCC ~~assessments for~~based accountability.

Upon completion of the timeline and implementation documents, RIDE sent these materials to every LEA in Rhode Island. RIDE staff members conducted regional meetings to orient educators to the changes and to the additions that the Common Core will bring about. These regional meetings also provided educators with opportunities to discuss implications and needs, which ~~will help~~helped to ensure fidelity of implementation throughout the transition to the Common Core. During these meetings and continuously thereafter, RIDE has been developing and distributing content-specific training materials with a focus on ELA and ~~math~~Math. ~~The focus of these materials has progressively supported educator's deeper understanding of the standards.~~

~~In~~To further support ~~of our implementation of~~the CCSS transition, we ~~obtained~~secured a GE grant to ~~develop a CCSS Ambassador program. The purpose of the grant is to help parents and the~~community~~communities~~ understand what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) mean for our students and our classrooms ~~and how the CCSS prepare our students for college and for challenging careers. As part of~~. Through this grant, ~~throughout~~the 2013-2014 school year, RIDE has been conducting ~~included~~extensive outreach to help promote increased understanding of the CCSS ~~throughout the state.~~ Communication materials and CCSS videos were developed and shared at outreach events throughout the state. Over thirty events ~~have been~~were conducted in RI school districts and for educational organizations. ~~At these events, members of Rhode Island Common Core Ambassadors team~~Most importantly, a group of thirty experienced Rhode Island educators, have worked with local educators to plan visits to served as "Common Core Ambassadors", hosting events throughout Rhode Island communities ~~and~~to provide information ~~as to how~~on the CCSS.

During the 2014-2015 school year, we continued to support educators, parents and community members during the transition through partnering with school districts and organizations to host outreach events on the CCSS will affect teachersPARCC assessments. Communication materials developed by RIDE and materials developed by the PARCC states are being shared with districts and students in Rhode Island schoolsat the outreach events throughout the state. In addition, sessions are being hosted specifically for educators to provide them with information about the design and

development of the PARCC assessment.

### ***Supports for educators in the understanding the Common Core***

RIDE implemented a process to ensure that all educators have the tools and training necessary to engage in an ongoing study of the standards. This process ~~will help~~helped educators understand the Common Core Standards deeply enough to effectively align lessons, assessments, and resources with the Common Core. RIDE ~~is in the process of offering~~offered the *Study of Standards* training, developed in partnership with The Dana Center of the University of Texas at Austin, to educators across the state ~~with the goal of~~and directly training more than 6,000 educators. The *Study of the Standards* training ~~teaches~~taught educators a process ~~through which they can implement a~~of continuous study of the standards in their schools, ~~and the training helps educators learn to use~~and provided the tools ~~they will need in order~~necessary to study the standards.

The *Study of the Standards* ~~instructs~~instructed and ~~guides~~guided educators regarding:

- how to use a provided set of tools in order to ensure that their LEA has in place
- curriculum that is aligned with the standards; and
- how to integrate the standards effectively into their daily instruction.

We ~~conduct~~conducted separate sessions on Mathematics and English Language Arts in order to enable participants to experience the purpose, intent, depth, and clarity of the standards. These trainings were designed to engage educators in examining the coherence and alignment of the standards both vertically (across grade levels) and horizontally (between subjects within a grade), and the training sessions therefore include educators in kindergarten through grade 12. The training ~~emphasizes~~emphasized the process for integrating the standards into a teacher's instruction and assessment plan. Educators can apply tools and processes that they learn in these training sessions to any content at any grade level.

Our goal ~~is~~was to ensure that as many teachers, school-based administrators, and higher-education faculty members within teacher-preparation programs attend the sessions as possible ~~—so that all educators have the common tools and common language for implementing the standards in their classrooms. LEAs identify. LEAs identified~~ appropriate educators in their schools to participate in trainings, including general-education classroom teachers, teachers of English Learners and of students with disabilities, and school and district leaders. ~~To date, more~~More than 6,000 educators in Rhode Island ~~have~~ participated in a *Study of the Standards* session. This figure includes approximately 5,800 teachers or instructional leaders, 200 principals or assistant principals, and 45 central-office administrators representing LEAs. ~~Over the next two years, an additional 900 Rhode Island educators will go through Study of Standards training.~~ In order to demonstrate the alignment between the components of the Common Core and the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards, we

~~will hold~~held additional sessions for ESL teachers and other general educators who teach English Learners.

RIDE ~~is~~did not ~~training~~train every educator in each LEA directly, but we ~~are developing~~developed resources and protocols ~~for those who attend the training to use when they share the tools that were shared~~ with other educators in ~~their~~Rhode Island schools. In addition, we ~~are developing~~ developed other tools to facilitate a deep understanding of the standards. As RIDE ~~develops~~developed these resource materials, we ~~make~~made the resources available to all educators through the RIDE website. These resources ~~include~~included guidance on how to use the tools with teams of grade-level educators that include general-education teachers, teachers of English Learners, and teachers of students with disabilities. For example, the Instructional Alignment Chart is a tool included in the Study of the Standards training (as well as in the intensive curriculum alignment). The protocol that we developed for this tool engages teams in discussing grade-level standards and identifying the standard that addresses the same topic in the prior and subsequent grades. The protocol also discusses the changes that should occur in instruction from grade to grade so that each member of the team better understands what he or she is expected to teach in each grade level. After the members of the team clearly understand what they should teach at each grade level, the team engages in discussions regarding the implications for the various levels of instruction and assessment. Using these tools, educators discuss the diverse instructional needs of their student population, including students with disabilities and English Learners. Educators also learn how to integrate the WIDA ELP standards into instruction and assessment.

To ensure that new teachers and principals are well-versed in the Common Core, RIDE ~~invites~~invited higher-education teachers and leaders to *Study of the Standards* sessions. Participation in these trainings ~~enables~~enabled educators in teacher- and principal-~~preparation~~ preparation programs to use the same language and concepts that we ~~are using~~used to train educators and school leaders currently working in our K-12 system. We ~~continue to meet~~met regularly with staff members from the R.I. Office of Higher Education and with two content specialists in teacher-preparation programs to receive their input as we transitioned to the Common Core and PARCC. We ~~will~~continue ~~inviting to~~ invite our partners in higher education to participate in training sessions and in other opportunities for professional development.

~~To date, thirty~~Thirty-five higher-education faculty members, many of whom are in teacher-placement or teacher-preparation programs for incoming teachers and principals, have participated in our Study of Standards sessions to learn how to prepare our incoming teachers and school leaders on transition to the Common Core.

As a next step in supporting educators in developing a deep understanding of the CCSS, RIDE identified key areas of transition and knowledge of CCSS and created modules available online for all districts. Modules were also available for full day workshop sessions. Over 2,500 teacher leaders and administrators attended these sessions to provide additional professional development support in their schools and

districts. These modules provided opportunities for educators to dive deeply into the big shifts of the ELA CCSS such as text complexity, academic vocabulary, text-dependent questions, writing an argument, and challenging content in mathematics including Fractions and Functions. These professional development sessions and modules on Common Core ELA and Mathematics topics are being converted into interactive e-learning modules to expand and increase use.

Rhode Island is using the Math Science Partnership Grants (Title IIA) to support in-depth study of Math and Science practices through summer intensive workshops with schools in 8 districts. The content from that in-depth work is now being developed into online professional development modules to support all Rhode Island educators. Rhode Island's current Math Science Partnership Grant is a partnership between Providence, our largest district and district with 21 schools identified as priority or focus, and Roger Williams University. This project involves focused work with grade 3-5 educators in deepening content knowledge and instruction practice through intensive summer workshops focused and regular coaching support throughout the 2015-2016 school year. These modules will be available fall 2015.

Finally RIDE has developed a Close Reading Institute, which is engaging school teams comprised of general educators, special educators, and teachers of English Language Learners in the development of lessons designed to teach students close reading skills. Consultants are providing the teams with feedback to refine lesson plans to ensure the lesson addresses all aspects of close reading and includes supports for struggling readers and English Language Learners. RIDE also continues to keep the Transition to the Common Core website with information and links to Common Core resources for educators.

### ***Instructional materials, Curriculum, and the Common Core***

In addition to training teachers and principals in all Rhode Island LEAs in the ~~Common Core State Standards~~CCSS, RIDE ~~provides~~provided intensive alignment training in a subset of targeted LEAs. The intent of this intensive training ~~is was~~ to build capacity within ~~those select~~ LEAs and to help teams of educators ~~from those LEAs~~ develop high-quality curriculum resources that RIDE ~~will later provide~~has now provided to educators in all LEAs.

In 2008, RIDE entered a partnership with The Dana Center to engage LEAs in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with one another and with the standards in mathematics and science. When Rhode Island won a Race to the Top grant in 2010, we expanded our plans for curriculum-development work with the Dana Center. ~~We see the~~The Dana Center ~~as has~~ a key partner in implementing our vision of having coherent and aligned curriculum for all students in all subject areas. In addition to building capacity in our LEAs, this partnership ~~will produce~~has produced substantive model curricula in mathematics, science, English language arts (ELA), and social studies, which ~~we will make~~have been made available through our instructional-improvement

system so that all LEAs can use and adapt the curricula. ~~Our goal is to develop four model~~The developed curriculum included:

- three curricula models in ~~mathematics, three~~ English Language Arts;
- six curricula models in ~~science, two~~ Mathematics;
- four curricula models in ~~ELA, Science;~~
- and one curriculum model in ~~social studies by 2014-15.~~ Social Studies.

We ~~have~~ made mathematics and science our priorities because mathematics and science are the areas where our data ~~show~~ have shown the greatest need for stronger, better-aligned curricula.

The curriculum-development process ~~includes~~ included two strands of work: curriculum writing and leadership development. Through this curriculum-development process, teams of approximately 10 teachers per grade level ~~come~~ came together over two years, as the writing team, to build a standards-aligned scope and sequence that will become the scope and sequence for the LEA. Teacher teams ~~include~~ included content-area teachers as well as teachers of English Learners and teachers of students with disabilities. The teachers on each team “~~unpack~~ unpacked” the standards, examining the vertical alignment within subjects and the horizontal alignment between standards in different subjects. Through this process, the teams ~~identify~~ identified opportunities to teach concepts and skills from one set of standards (such as writing or mathematics) in other subjects across the curriculum. The teams then ~~construct~~ constructed the scope, content, and sequence of the curriculum, addressing the need for differentiated instruction and specific language-acquisition skill development as part of the scope-and-sequence design.

During the second year of the process, the team ~~work~~ worked from the scope and sequence to create units of study—the planned, written, and taught curriculum. Because of the process involved in the creation of these documents, the units of study are closely aligned with the standards and there is tremendous teacher buy-in. The final step in this work ~~is~~ was a process called the Professional Teaching Model (PTM). The PTM is an eight-step process that expands upon the collaborative discussions, using the Instructional Alignment Chart, a tool that the teams used during Study of the Standards and the early sessions of the intensive curriculum-alignment work. The PTM ~~promotes~~ promoted dialogue about content and pedagogy, ~~and the PTM also~~ common language and collaboration among educators in addition to increased student achievement and program coherence. Through this process, educators ~~study~~ studied the standards, ~~determine~~ determined the criteria for student demonstration of the standards, and ~~plan~~ planned common lessons. This planning ~~includes~~ included developing appropriate accommodations or strategies for diverse learning needs, implementing the lessons, and analyzing and revising lessons based on student results.

LEA leaders, principals, and lead teachers ~~participate~~ participated in five leadership sessions to study the standards and to identify the structures that ~~need~~ needed to be in

place to support implementing the Common Core standards in their schools or in their curriculum. In the leadership sessions, these educators also ~~studystudied~~ the assessments that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The leadership teams ~~beginbegan~~ by examining current student outcomes—both overall and for specific populations of students—to identify and focus attention on populations of students whom our schools may not be serving well, such as English Learners or low-income students. The teams ~~identifyidentified~~ achievement gaps and specific areas in need of improvement, and the teams set three-year goals for raising student achievement in ~~specific areas and for specific populations of students for whom there are achievement gaps~~specified areas.

The teams ~~participateparticipated~~ in a simulation of leading change within the LEA in order to help the school leaders prepare for obstacles they may encounter. ~~So that they understand this work deeply~~To ensure full understanding, the leadership teams ~~then engageengaged~~ in the same detailed work of examining the standards ~~thatin which~~ teams ~~of teachers have engaged in~~. We ~~traintrained~~ leadership teams to use a “walk-through” protocol to collect data that they can use to identify areas of alignment and opportunities for improvement. Finally, we ~~traintrained~~ the teams on how to use the data that they collect in these walk-throughs in order to engage in conversations with teachers regarding aligned curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment. ~~–The output of this work iswas~~ a common set of vocabulary, tools, and structures for leaders to use in support of teacher implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

RIDE remains committed to ensuring that all Rhode Island educators have the curriculum, tools, and understanding necessary to provide a rich classroom experience that is aligned to the CCSS and appropriate for all learners. ~~Through this curriculum development process twenty~~Twenty districts have participated in CCSS mathematics curriculum development and three LEAs have participated in CCSS English Language Arts development. ~~In addition, RIDE issued Common Corethree rounds of \$20,000 or less per district CCSS Mini-Grants to further support LEA transition to the CCSS. RIDE issued three rounds of CCSS Mini-Grants. These grants were small (\$20,000 or less per district) and targeted for specific needs in the field such as CCSS curriculum or assessment development.~~ A condition of the grant iswas that products from the mini-grant ~~such as the aforementioned assessments will~~must be made available ~~to the field~~statewide. Fifteen grants were awarded to 36 LEAs working in partnership on key curriculum and instruction areas aligned to the CCSS.

This work has resulted in substantial changes in practices in Rhode Island. Today, more districts are collaborating to develop and revise curriculum. The collaboration on curriculum development across districts has led to collaboration on writing common assessments aligned to curriculum, and joint professional development to design units of study and identify curriculum resources. Further, post-interviews on intensive curriculum alignment development with district educators indicate that they are better consumers of educational resources including textbooks, supplemental materials or online resources. Furthermore, more districts report that they select resources based on their curriculum and standards rather than define curriculum by the resource or program

used. In the development of curriculum design, districts indicate a belief that educators must have a priority role in curriculum writing and that writing a standards-based curriculum is effective professional development. Integrating curriculum writing and professional development is now viewed as a key feature in applying for any grants that focus on Common Core State Standards.

Prior to this curriculum development work, the alignment of curriculum to standards was very uneven across LEAs. Many districts did not have a guaranteed and viable curriculum in the major content areas. Today, districts that did not have ELA, Mathematics, Science or Social Studies curriculum are now implementing K-12 vertically articulated programs. The common practice of timely revisions of curriculum was seldom done within Rhode Island. Today, districts are creating long-term curriculum revision plans that include continuing collaborative inter-district relationships and teacher teams.

### ***Building a Comprehensive Assessment System***

Rhode Island is committed to developing a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the Common Core standards that will provide data to inform curriculum and instructional decisions at the state, LEA, and school levels. This system is a critical component of the Rhode Island Strategic Plan, *Transforming Education in Rhode Island* (RIDE Strategic Plan). The Rhode Island Basic Education Program regulations (BEP) require each LEA to develop a comprehensive assessment system that measures student performance and that includes formative, interim, and summative evaluations in each core content area.

The Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance for a Comprehensive Assessment System document defines a comprehensive assessment system as a coordinated plan for monitoring the academic achievement of students from prekindergarten through grade 12. The goals of the comprehensive assessment system are:

- 1. to increase student learning by producing actionable data;
- 2. to evaluate the effectiveness of programs; and
- 3. to ensure that all students are making progress toward achieving learning goals.

A comprehensive assessment system must be appropriate for the student population, and the comprehensive assessment system must address the assessment needs of all students, including students with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and students in early-childhood programs. RIDE ~~conducts~~conducted monthly webinars to support LEAs as they develop comprehensive assessment systems. We ~~record~~recorded these webinars, and ~~we post~~posted them on our website. These webinars ~~focus~~focused on a variety of topics, including reliability and validity, cultural and linguistic demands of assessments, and how a comprehensive assessment system supports other initiatives (e.g., RTI, educator evaluation, and performance-based graduation requirements). To ensure that LEAs ~~are~~were well-informed about the

development and long-term role the comprehensive assessment system, RIDE developed and published an overview and resource materials, the Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance for a Comprehensive Assessment System.

During the 2014-2015 school year we initiated the Assessment Project, which is designed to examine assessment practices in the state. The goals of the project are:

1. Learn from the source, nature, and volume of testing from a sample of districts;
2. Learn how much testing is duplicative in nature and/or measuring redundant knowledge and skills;
3. Understand the extent to which data from assessments is driving instruction, curriculum revisions, and professional development; and
4. Understand the status and quality are of locally-developed assessments.

Our next steps will help participating districts understand how well the data from these assessments are being used to support instruction. As part of this work, we are examining the content coverage of their assessments and calibrating the scoring of student work on local assessments.

We are also working within RIDE to examine the cross-office explicit and implicit assessment expectations that we communicate to districts. To that end we are:

1. Identifying opportunities to coordinate efforts to ensure that separate assessments are not being implemented for each initiative.
2. Working with the National Center on Education Outcomes (NCEO) to examine RIDEs various initiatives requiring the use of local assessments, their necessity, and their use. NCEO will be interviewing RIDE staff regarding the current requirements across the agency. We will then share that information with and discuss our requirements with national experts who will provide recommendations to RIDE.
3. With NCEO, RIDE will also conduct a district-based study in the Spring 2015 to learn more about the perspective of key stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, parents, students. The purpose of this study is to better understand the strengths and challenges of the current assessment system from the perspective of districts.

Finally, RIDE continues to build local assessment literacy by working with assistant superintendents and curriculum directors so that they can align their district testing strategies to Rhode Island's Comprehensive Assessment System guidance. ([http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/ComprehensiveAssessmentSystem\(CAS\).aspx](http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/ComprehensiveAssessmentSystem(CAS).aspx))

To directly affect the day-to-day learning cycle in the classroom, we ~~are developing~~developed online formative assessment modules to teach every educator in Rhode Island how to use tools and processes to effectively design and utilize formative assessment practices. These practices are connected and embedded in the curriculum in order to accurately measure student learning ~~in regard to daily and weekly learning aims.~~ This training built upon the curriculum work that the LEAs have completed.

Further, these web-based modules ~~will be part~~are now of the Rhode Island Instructional Support System (ISS) ~~in 2012, but were moved to Sharepoint and are accessible to all educators in fall 2013 because of the challenging functionality with the Instructional Management System.~~ With access to high-quality training on formative assessment, all teachers will have the skills to:

- 1. embed assessment within the learning activity;
- 2. directly link it to the current unit of instruction; and
- 3. use the information gathered to inform instructional “next steps.”

The online modules include direct instruction, testimony from RI educators, video models of practice, assessments of learning, required readings, and extension activities. ~~Almost LEAs have completed or begun to complete the formative assessment modules. LEA implementation has varied from small teams of educators at each school completing the modules in professional learning communities to school and district wide completion through professional development days. The formative assessment online course design includes case reviews, vignettes of classroom formative assessment practices, classroom videos, student and teacher interviews, and examples of lesson plans and formative assessment classroom tools from Rhode Island teachers. Topics addressed by the modules include:~~

- general assessment literacy;
- an overview of the formative assessment process;
- learning progressions;
- learning goals and criteria for success;
- eliciting evidence and providing descriptive feedback;
- self- and peer-assessment, creating a collaborative classroom culture; and
- integration of formative assessment at the building level.

The online course supported professional development at the school and district level. The professional development was designed to allow participants to go through the modules at their own pace, according to their schedule. To capture video of Rhode Island educators engaged in learning the process of formative assessment, RIDE conducted a pilot for this project.

Although implementation of the modules has varied, almost every LEA has implemented the modules. Some LEAs had educators participate in communities of practice, wherein a group of educators completed the modules independently and met on a regular basis to discuss the modules and share implementation strategies. Other LEAs had a small group of educators complete the modules and those educators incorporated the content into in person professional development for educators. In some cases, LEAs included the formative assessment modules as part of the professional development goals for educator evaluation. Finally, in some LEAs educators completed the modules independently.

This will professional development has resulted in increased formative assessment knowledge and practices within Rhode Island. Over 70 percent of participants reported having further implemented formative assessment strategies in their teaching practice and have new data collection since completing the formative assessment training strategies. The vast majority of educators who completed the modules know how to use formative data, understand learning progressions, and how to use them to inform instruction and report that they have begun incorporating elements of formative assessment into unit and lesson planning. Educators are more transparent about learning goals for students; use learning goals with students; use formative data to regroup students for instruction, re-teach, and increase or decrease the pace of instruction; and have increased the descriptive feedback that give to students.

RIDE continues to support implementation of formative assessment practices by continuing to provide access to the formative assessment modules and integrating the concepts into other areas of work including our Math/Science Partnership Grant work.

RIDE has provided all LEAs in the state with high-quality interim assessments ~~so that they can better assess to support monitoring~~ students' progress toward annual learning goals. These assessments ~~will be are~~ available through the ISS Instructional Support System, and teachers can administer these assessments online as well as through the paper-and-pencil format. ~~These assessments will no longer be accessed through the IMS after the 2013-2014 school year and will available on the new Instructional Support System in the Fall 2014.~~ These interim assessments use enhanced online accommodations that we developed to meet Accessible Portable Item Profile (APIP) standards. These standards ensure access for all learners, specifically students with disabilities, English Learners, and low-achieving students. Many LEAs in Rhode Island requested that the state provide such interim assessments to enhance the development of the comprehensive assessment systems that LEAs have developed. High-quality interim assessments, which are valid measures of progress toward annual goals, are difficult for an LEA to create in-house and are expensive for a small LEA to purchase.

The interim-assessment system ~~will be is~~ made up of two components: fixed-form assessments in English language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 11 and a test-building engine with a comprehensive item bank. The test-building engine ~~will enable~~ enables educators to build high-quality assessments in English language arts,

~~mathematics~~ Mathematics, science, and social studies. Items ~~would~~ include selected response, evidence-based selected response, short answer, constructed response, and performance tasks. The item bank currently includes a total of 8,121 test questions in four content areas including 2968 items in mathematics, 798 in Science aligned Next Generation Science Standards, 2704 items in English Language Arts, and 1651 in Social Studies. We envision the test-building engine being able to serve two purposes for LEAs. First, ~~at the LEA level~~, teacher teams can work together to build assessments aligned with the LEA curriculum ~~and~~ that ~~teachers~~ could ~~use~~ be used as end-of-unit assessments implemented in every school. Second, individual educators can develop assessments to assess specific skills on a more frequent basis. The Interim Assessment platform allows educators to assign, administer, and score both the teacher-created and state-created fixed form assessments. The LEAs that have accessed the tools reported gaining a greater understanding of the CCSS through the item content and item types available in the Interim Assessment System. Further, LEAs also reported benefitting from the calibration activities surrounding the scoring of constructed responses.

Finally, ~~as part of our Comprehensive Assessment System~~, Rhode Island is participating in several national consortia, which are ~~or will implement~~ implementing common summative assessments. Rhode Island is a governing member in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium, a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) consortium, and a member of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. Rhode Island ~~is taking~~ has taken an active role in each consortium to ensure that the assessments are rigorous, of high quality, and valid and reliable measurements of the student population the assessment is designed to assess.

PARCC ~~is creating~~ has created a common assessment system to assess students in kindergarten through high school. The assessments will determine whether students are college- and career-ready or on track. The PARCC summative assessment will have two components. ~~Through performance tasks (e.g., writing, Performance Based Assessments (PBA) and End of Year Assessments (EOY). The PBA in ELA/literacy will involve analyzing literature and a narrative writing task. Students will read texts and write several pieces to demonstrate they can read and understand sufficiently complex texts independently; write effectively when analyzing text, solving mathematics using and analyzing sources; and build and communicate knowledge by integrating, comparing and synthesizing ideas. In math, students will be asked to solve problems involving the key knowledge and skills for their grade level, express mathematical reasoning and construct a mathematical argument, and apply concepts to solve model real-world problems. The End-of-year assessments (EOY) in ELA/literacy and Math will require students will demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge by answering computer-based on everyday scenarios), machine-scorable questions. The PBA and EOY will be combined with the performance-based assessment to produce a student's summative assessment score.~~

RIDE has been working with LEA's to ensure all schools are ready to administer the first

~~component will assess hard-to-measure standards. The second component is made up of innovative items that machines can score.~~ operational assessment in 2015. More than 1 million students in nearly 16,000 schools participated in the spring 2014 PARCC field test across the fourteen participating states and the District of Columbia. Almost all Rhode Island LEAs ~~are participating~~ participated in the PARCC field test during the 2013-2014 school year. ~~Feedback was collected through a student and test administrator survey, as well as school visits, and was used to inform improvements in administrative procedures.~~ In addition, RIDE gathered feedback from district and school level personal to inform how we, as an agency, would support the LEAs during our first operational year. In addition to the online modules, manuals, and tutorials developed by PARCC, RIDE has provided a day and half training to district and school level educators to support test administration. We have also worked closely with district data managers and technology directors to assist in registering students for the assessment and ensuring the schools have the technology to support test administration. RIDE will continue to support districts and monitor implementation throughout both PBA and EOY test administration windows.

PARCC is also developing ~~twoseveral~~ optional assessments ~~(early and mid-year)~~ that schools can use to provide instructionally useful feedback to teachers and students but that do not contribute to a student's summative-assessment score. ~~The first is expected to be~~ ~~These assessments include a~~ diagnostic ~~and~~assessment, speaking and listening assessment, K-2 formative tasks, and performance based modules. The Diagnostic will ~~provide~~ an early indicator of student knowledge and skills in grades 2-8, ~~and the second is expected to be mid-year~~ and support progress monitoring. The Performance Based Modules will be performance tasks for grades 3-11. ~~PARCC is also developing a K-4 formative assessment to monitor readiness for grade 2.~~ The K-2 formative tasks will be embedded in classroom instruction. Finally, the speaking and listening assessment will be a K-12 assessment utilizing performance-based activities to capture information on student learning strengths and needs in speaking and listening during classroom discussions and when engaged in formal presentations. All assessments are expected to be computer-delivered ~~or include a computer based data collection tool.~~

The NCSC ~~is developing~~developed a comprehensive system that addresses the curriculum, instruction, and assessment needs of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The NCSC ~~is developing~~developed a summative assessment in English language arts and Mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and 11. The NCSC ~~is designing~~designed this summative assessment to support valid inferences about student achievement on the assessed domains. The NCSC will use technology to deliver assessments with appropriate accommodations, to score, and to report on the assessments. In addition, the NCSC ~~is developing~~has developed curriculum and instruction tools, and the NCSC ~~is developing~~established state-level communities of practice. These resources ~~will~~ support educators as they design and implement appropriate instruction that addresses content and skill expectations aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); ~~these resources will also help prepare students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for postsecondary life.~~ ~~These resources also help prepare students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for~~

postsecondary life. Rhode Island participated in the NCSC comprehensive approach to field testing. This field testing approach built upon on evidence-centered design (ECD) item development process. This field test produced research studies, including an analysis of student interaction studies using the test administration platform and items. Action research was designed to understand accessibility options for students with the most complex needs, survey research documented what was working and what needed improvement for both the platform and items, as well as a two-phase large-scale pilot test. Pilot 1, the first phase of a two-part pilot, was conducted last spring and resulted in item statistics for entire item bank, and later, item data review and revisions. This fall, Pilot 2 was completed with the purpose of refining test forms prior to the operational test in spring 2015. As with the PARCC preparation, RIDE has been working closely with school and district educators to support a smooth administration this spring. RIDE will be providing in-person teacher administration training as well as using webinars, online modules, and manuals to support implementation.

Rhode Island is a member of the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA is a consortium of 35 states and the District of Columbia dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English Learners (ELs). As a member of the WIDA Consortium, Rhode Island uses the ACCESS for ELs to annually measure the English-language proficiency of English Learners across the state. The ACCESS for ELs is aligned with the WIDA Summative English Language Proficiency Standards, and which the U.S. Department of Education has accepted ~~the ACCESS assessment~~ as a valid and reliable assessment of English proficiency. WIDA has received an Enhanced Assessment Grant to build a new, comprehensive and balanced technology-based assessment system for English Learners. This assessment system will be anchored in the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards, which are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The new WIDA assessment system will benefit from rigorous ongoing research, and the assessment system will have the support of comprehensive professional development and outreach. The system will include a summative test, an on-demand diagnostic (screener) test, classroom benchmark assessments, and formative-assessment resources. This new assessment, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 will replace the paper-based version of ACCESS for ELLs with a computer-based, summative assessment of the developing social and academic English language proficiency of English language learners in Grades 1 through 12 in 2015-16.

### **Providing access to and professional development in the use of data to drive instructional decision-making**

Our theory of action emphasizes that effective teachers and effective leaders must have the support of comprehensive student-centered ~~systems, particularly~~ data collection and analysis systems. One To that end, one of our most important state roles, ~~therefore~~, is to support LEA efforts to improve student academic achievement by giving them the data and tools necessary to track students' progress relative to the standards and helping LEAs to use this information to inform instruction. To achieve this goal, RIDE is building an -Instructional Support System (ISS) that will include a curriculum-and-assessment module, Response to Intervention module, and online professional-development

modules. ~~The IMS will enable educators to access and analyze data showing how their students are performing against state standards and to use this knowledge to provide students with appropriate instructional supports. The system will also enable school leaders to access, analyze, and act on the differentiated strengths and needs of their teachers, and it will enable school leaders to provide teachers with appropriate professional development, resources, and assistance. The formative-assessment modules and the interim assessments will also be integrated into the IMS. Through the IMS, educators will access the curriculum documents, including scope and sequence, units of study, and lesson plans that LEAs will develop through the intensive curriculum alignment. A statewide lesson-plan template will allow educators to share lessons with other educators across the state and to receive feedback on these lessons. The lesson-plan format will include a section to describe instructional strategies to ensure that all students can access and participate in the curriculum.~~ For example, ESL professionals will be able to add appropriate instructional strategies to lessons in any content area that general education teachers from their district, and even from other districts, can access – thereby building capacity for supporting appropriate instruction for English Learners in all content areas. ~~Rhode Island launched an Instructional Management System (IMS) in Fall 2012 that provided teachers, principals, and administrators with access to statewide and local data. While both the State and the LEAs implemented the tasks identified in their respective Scopes of Work for the IMS LEA, end-users experienced continual functionality challenges with the IMS which limited the scope of its use. In Spring 2013, the IMS platform vendor notified Rhode Island that they will no longer support the product after the 2013-2014 school year. Following the announcement that the system would not be maintained by the vendor beyond Summer 2014, LEAs scaled back their use of the IMS system and have limited their end-user training during school year 2013-2014. Rhode Island has identified an alternative solution, and is proceeding with the first phase of development on the alternative solution starting in Winter 2014.~~

~~With assistance from the RTT Reform Support Network, Rhode Island determined that the best rebuild solution would be a combination of available system and data structures already developed by RTT partner states.~~ The planned solution, the Instructional Support System, will provide educators with access to a variety of tools and capabilities equivalent to the system that Rhode Island described in the its original Race to the Top application, including:

1. Easy-to-navigate data dashboards that provide educators, principals, and district administrators with “point and click” access to reports, key performance indicators, and drill-down data [Phase I];
2. Ability to analyze the longitudinal picture of each student’s performance from the point of entry into system through graduation [Phase I];
3. Access to the interim assessment item bank via RIDEMap, as well as the ability to generate and print tests, collect data with ease, and view results immediately [Phase II];

4. Access to a robust set of teacher resources, including model lesson plans, units of study developed by curriculum cohorts, and annotated student work aligned with standards as a model of proficient work across grade levels [Phase III]; and
5. Ability to compare student performance relative to the state's expectations, based on an array of assessment tools, and to access and use all data collected on a student, including attendance, discipline, and state summative test scores [Phase I (basic) and Phase III (dynamic)].

RIDE has implemented all three phases of work and is continuing to expand the functionality of the Instructional Support System. New functionality will include a professional development platform, an early warning system, and a school diagnostic screening tool. The professional development platform includes a collaborative workspace for online courses as well as a rating system to evaluation online professional development. The early warning system will be developed for all educators grades 6-12 to access individual and aggregate level data on student EWS indicators (i.e., attendance, discipline, years over age, state assessment math and reading scores, and on track percentage) aligned to national best practice and Rhode Island specific data points. The school diagnostic screening tool will be used to evaluate and monitor schools on key performance indicators over time. This new functionality will be implemented spring 2015.

Highly effective teachers and leaders are at the heart of our theory of action. Therefore, RIDE will be providing high-quality, targeted professional development on data-driven instruction to advance student achievement. This training ~~will build~~built upon the Response to Intervention training aimed at improving achievement for at-risk students that has been occurring in the state since 2005. The Rhode Island Response to Intervention Initiative provided district leaders, principals, and teachers with professional development in using state and local assessment data to inform decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. ~~If data and instructional-management practice are to translate into improvements in the day-to-day cycle of teaching and learning in our classrooms, teachers must have both the skills and the motivation to use data effectively to improve student outcomes.~~

~~The RIDE designed and delivered the “Using Data Professional Development series will be Series”, which was~~ made up of four different components of professional development, each one ~~tiered by content and delivery~~differentiated based on specific LEA needs. A school leadership team made up of ~~four~~the principal and three educators, ~~including the principal~~ from every school in Rhode Island, ~~will participate~~participated in this training. Before delivering the professional development, our vendor ~~will assess~~assessed the needs of each LEA, ~~assign~~assigned each cohort to a specific ~~tier~~level of training, and ~~tailor~~tailored the professional development based on the results. Through this training, principals and other school leaders ~~will learn~~learned how to use assessment data to track student progress, to provide support to students not making progress, and to ensure that our schools use effective practices for diverse learners.

In ~~small~~ cohorts of no more than 25 educators, teams from each school and district

representatives join together in a year-long, tiered professional development series designed to teach educators how to collaboratively analyze relevant student data to inform educational decisions and increase student achievement outcomes. In addition to meeting in cohorts, educators ~~will~~ were also ~~be~~ provided a data coach that ~~will~~ visited each individual school up to three times throughout the school year to provide on-site, tailored support in using data.

The state completed training for ~~134 schools in~~ 1226 educators from 289 school during the 2012-13 ~~school year,~~ and ~~began the first three days of training in late July 2013 for another 156 Rhode Island schools, including traditional public, charter, and state-operated schools-~~ 2014 school years. All feedback gained in the 2012-2013 school year was used to refine and tailor the professional development series for 2013-2014 and individual meetings with LEA district leaders (when requested) were held to ensure that the series met the individual district needs. As a result of the Using Data professional development a common language and process for using data across Rhode Island schools has been established. Data collected through the sessions and site visits demonstrates that schools made progress in their implementation of data use techniques and conversations. Over 85% of educators reported that the Data Use PD Series helped their schools build a transparent data culture and improve data practices. The Data Use PD helped teachers see the connections between data collection and data use to drive decisions and instruction. Although the training series has been completed, educators continue to have access to the training materials and RIDE has integrated the cycle of inquiry into other areas of work including training on the Instructional Support System.

Under the IDEA, Rhode Island is currently developing a new performance indicator in the State Performance Plan, which is focused on Results Driven Accountability (RDA). A major investment of this area of work is the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) initiative funded by the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs under the State Personnel Development Grant. The Rhode Island Multi-Tiered Systems of Support initiative is a training and technical assistance opportunity that will provide training and systems development in schools for the implementation of an integrated model of supporting academic (Response to Intervention) and behavioral (Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports) interventions, strategies and practices. Schools are identified through an application process with priority awarded to schools in the intervention status of priority, focus or warning. Schools are enrolled as a cohort and commit to three years of intensive training and in-school coaching in the behaviors and practices of the MTSS model which results in a self-sustainable integrated RTI/PBIS framework for providing evidence-based and data-based decision making procedures to enhance universal, targeted and intensive intervention.

The RI MTSS project is in its second year of implementation with 12 schools identified as priority, focus, or warning are enrolled in the first two cohorts. The goals of the project in participating schools are to:

4.

- Improve student outcomes
- Enhance program quality in reading, math and behavior (developing fidelity of implementation)
- Demonstrate a minimum of 20% improvement for student outcomes in reading, math and behavior
- Develop a continuum of supports and technical assistance for district implementation
- Create a common vision that aligns the beliefs and practices necessary to support the needs of all students
- Develop consensus and commitment for the implementation of MTSS and creating efficiencies around resources, priorities, and integration of services
- Establish ongoing feedback loops to support a model of continuous improvement through data- based decision making related to MTSS implementation.

## Support for Students and the Common Core

### *English Learners and Students with Disabilities*

Our approach to ensuring that students with disabilities, English Learners, and students who are low-achieving reach college and career readiness is inherent in our strategic-plan goal of closing achievement gaps and in our regulatory requirement for a tiered instructional system built on the foundation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum. The Rhode Island Basic Education Program Regulations (BEP-requires) require each LEA to implement a set of coherent, organized instructional strategies designed to ensure positive improvements in student learning. LEAs must base these strategies on current research, and LEAs must adjust these strategies according to student progress-monitoring and to assessment data. The organized strategies must include specific interventions for students who are not meeting proficiency standards or who are at risk of non-promotion or of dropping out of school. Additionally, each LEA must provide a full continuum of universal, targeted, and intensive supports that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, research-based, and designed to respond to student needs in compliance with the specific requirements for support services.

Our ~~plan to~~ transition to the Common Core, ~~as we have described above,~~ included providing professional development, resources, and systems that include specific connections to address the needs of students with disabilities, English Learners, and students who are low achieving. The first step toward meeting the needs of all learners is a core instructional program that is designed to include all learners. ~~We know,~~ however, that some students will need supports beyond the core instructional program; therefore RIDE will develop ~~specific~~ supports ~~to assist for~~ educators ~~in analyzing to~~ identify and ~~implementing~~ implement the ~~learning and instructional~~ accommodation ~~factors~~ necessary ~~to ensure that for~~ students with disabilities and English Learners

~~receive the support they need to become ready for success~~ to be successful in college and in careers. RIDE is committed to addressing the needs of all students through its professional development and resource development. As such RIDE encourages the participation of all educators in content-based professional development. We feel it is critical that special educators, teachers of English Learners, and general education teachers work together to design curriculum, instruction, and assessments for students. We believe that through this strong collaboration educators will learn from one another and students will receive rigorous-but-accessible instruction.

As a member of the National Center and State Collaborative, we ~~will be developing~~ developed resources to support educators to design and implement appropriate instruction that addresses content and skill expectations aligned to the Common Core for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities ~~to prepare them for postsecondary life.~~ Curriculum resource guides for focus content within ~~mathematics~~ Mathematics and ELA ~~will~~ provide information on instruction within the general education setting, differentiation through Universal Design for Learning, and teaching and applying skills in meaningful content areas. ~~Online professional development modules will~~ help special educators gain an understanding of the prioritized academic content within learning progressions that describe a curricular sequence for how students develop understanding in each content area over time. Finally, formative and interim tools ~~will be~~ have been developed as part of comprehensive curriculum, instruction, and assessment resources that can be used by educators throughout the school year to monitor student progress. These resources are available on the [NCSC website](#) and [NCSC WIKI](#).

To ensure that English Learners will have the opportunity to achieve to ~~these~~ college- and career-ready standards, RIDE ~~will~~ continues to work with the WIDA Consortium to ensure alignment of the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. The WIDA consortium conducted an alignment study with the current WIDA standards and the Common Core. According to the executive summary of that study, adequate linking across all grade clusters exists between the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards Model Performance Indicators (MPIs) and the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening) and Mathematics.

Rhode Island is one of three states that have partnered with the Center for Applied Linguistics, ~~with at~~ the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, and with representatives from various institutions of higher education in the initial development of the next generation of WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). A large proportion of this work is the alignment of the ELPS with the Common Core State Standards to ensure a seamless and comprehensive common-standards framework for English Learners. Rhode Island (and the other 21 WIDA Consortium member states) will adopt this next generation of WIDA standards this spring, when final versions are ready. WIDA will offer a combination of printed guidance and training materials, computer-based trainings, and in-person training for LEAs.

RIDE also provides training and resources to teachers ~~responsible for instructing students who are English Learners to enable these teachers~~ to use the WIDA ELPS in conjunction with content standards. These resources and training opportunities will help educators meet the academic and language needs of English Learners at all proficiency levels. This added step of training and related materials will reinforce the need to develop both social and academic language skills for this population of students. The training and resources are targeted to both ESL professionals and all general-education professionals. This broad-based training reinforces our philosophy that the education of English Learners is the responsibility of all teachers, and the training also helps to build capacity, making the philosophy a reality in all classrooms. Training topics include an overview of the WIDA ELDS, working collaboratively to instruct and assess using the ELDS, differentiation, lesson planning, formative assessment, and data analysis.

Rhode Island is working with the PARCC consortium to analyze and implement the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities become ready for success in college and careers. Rhode Island is a member of the Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness Operational Working Group, which is drafting the PARCC accommodations policy. Computer-based testing under the PARCC assessments will provide a variety of ways of implementing universal design, and PARCC will use online accommodations to provide for increased access for students with disabilities. RIDE provided training for Curriculum Directors and Special Education Directors, as well as offered a webinar to all educators on the PARCC Accessibility and Accommodations policies for the PARCC field test. In preparing for the first operational administration we provided training to school and district educators on a process for identifying and evaluating appropriate accessibility features and accommodations for students. RIDE provided this training early in the school year to provide time for schools and districts to understand the PARCC accessibility and accommodations policy, gain experience with the online tools, practice them with their students, and discuss them with families. In addition, we provided webinars and other resources to support appropriate identification of supports for all learners.

~~Although our focus up to now has been on working with all educators to develop a deeper understanding of the Common Core State Standards, we are engaged in internal conversations regarding the resources and professional development opportunities on the Common Core that are specifically designed for educators working with students with disabilities.~~In addition, RIDE offered focused sessions of Study of the Standards, English Language Arts Text Complexity, Writing an Argument, and Mathematics Fractions for educators working with students with disabilities.- It is important that the work with the PARCC consortium inform our training and our supports for assisting LEAs in identifying appropriate the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities will have the opportunity to achieve to the college- and career-ready standards.

## Migration to CCSS for English Learners in Rhode Island

In May, 2013, RIDE conducted a survey of ELL Directors and Teachers to obtain an understanding of readiness for implementation on Common Core State Standards with English Language Learners (ELL or English Learners). ~~The RIDE ELL Team in partnership staff partnered~~ with the State ELL Advisory Committee and the ELL Directors ~~reviewed to review~~ the results of the survey. The results of the survey (attached) pointed toward a substantial need for professional development in (a) a comprehensive study of the standards and (b) training on the critical access skills for assisting English Learners in accessing and demonstrating proficiency in the CCSS.

On September 26 and 27, 2013, RIDE hosted a two--day workshop for ~~ELLEL~~ district level leaders. Day one focused on a review of the RIDE Study of the Standards. From informal surveys at the event, only 40% of the participants had participated in a deep study of the standards. The review also provided the ~~ELLEL~~ leaders the opportunity to examine the standards in great detail with other ~~ELLEL~~ administrators and teachers; an experience many had not enjoyed in previous training on the CCSS. Day two focused on the access skills that would be necessary for ~~ELLELs~~ to understand and demonstrate proficiency on the CCSS. This portion of the program ~~was led by Nancy Cloud and Amanda Sox of RI College and emphasized~~ focused on text complexity and instructional strategies and tools for overcoming barriers for the English ~~Language~~ Learner.

RIDE has continued to expand its work on the migration of CCSS for English Learners through a partnership curriculum project (description attached) with the Northeast Comprehensive Center staff including Kevin Perks, Program and Research Associate, WestEd, with Marla Perez-Selles, and Nancy Gerzon, of the Northeast Comprehensive Center. The purpose of the work is to develop a group of resources that districts across Rhode Island can use to integrate standards and strategies for supporting English Learners into existing content curricula.

## Migration of CCSS for Students with Disabilities in Rhode Island

Similar to the developments for the CCSS for ELLs, RIDE conducted a survey for Special Education Directors and teachers over the summer of 2013. Over 400 responses were received and processed. The results were reviewed with the State Special Education Advisory Committee and the Special Education Directors. RIDE held a special education directors briefing ~~on~~ in February 4, 2014, which included an overview of the CCSS and potential access challenges for students with disabilities. In addition, teams of directors reviewed the results of the CCSS readiness survey, discussed implementation challenges and opportunities within their districts and recommended action steps. ~~With Through~~ this evidence survey and subsequent discussion, RIDE ~~has found inconsistencies in the~~ discovered uneven involvement of special education administrators and teachers across the state in the implementation of CCSS and in some cases, inconsistencies unevenness at the district and building level. Planning for a statewide intervention has been difficult posed with the inconsistency of

need across the state and the diverse needs of students with disabilities in accessing CCSS. ~~In addition, most of the informal feedback from special education administrators, unfortunately, has been focused on procedural requirements such as developing CCSS compliant IEPs. This is obviously missing the need for a deep understanding of CCSS and the unique access challenges faced by a diverse student population versus the procedural requirements of a “compliant” IEP.~~

In response to the request from the LEAs, RIDE is revising the state recommended IEP protocols (the process by which IEP goals are developed in the RIDE IEP Guidebook) to drive users to a deeper understanding of CCSS through the IEP process. In the meantime the RIDE team will continue to offer opportunities for teachers and teams to learn from illustrations of districts implementing effective access strategies for students with disabilities through ongoing professional development opportunities.

### ***Ensuring our students are ready for college and careers***

As part of our goal of linking standards, graduation requirements, and college-entry requirements, Rhode Island is using the Common Core to support greater PK-20 alignment and integration between the Rhode Island PK-12 and higher-education systems.

The R.I. Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE) has committed to launch a study of the new exit standards for high school and to work with RIDE to use individual student scores from the Rhode Island high-school assessments to determine placement of recent high-school graduates into initial credit-bearing courses (i.e., non-developmental courses) in English and mathematics at RIBGHE institutions (the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island). This work is an initial step toward more significant vertical alignment between PK-12 and higher education within Rhode Island. In addition to this state effort, there are early-stage conversations taking place among the New England public colleges and universities planning to do similar work with exit standards across all of the NECAP states as well as across all five of the New England States (Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) participating in the New England Secondary School Consortium.

RIDE continues to pursue initiatives that will ensure that our graduates are well prepared for success in college and in challenging careers. Rhode Island was honored ~~this year~~ to receive a \$75,000 grant to expand opportunities for College Board Advanced Placement (AP) courses in persistently low-achieving public high schools serving low-income students. ~~The grant is from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. The Rhode Island Foundation will administer the funds, and RIDE is managing the program.~~

We ~~are using~~ the funds to support the training of teachers and teaching assistants to prepare them to teach AP courses. ~~“The goal of the program is to utilize AP to help drive reform in these high schools and better serve the students who attend them,~~

~~preparing these students for college or careers upon graduation,” wrote Richard M. Krasno, the executive director of the trust, in awarding the grant. As a result of the combined SEA/LEA efforts in this area, statewide participation in AP courses and exams has been increasing in Rhode Island high schools.~~

~~As Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist has noted, participation in AP courses and exams has been increasing in Rhode Island high schools, but we still see wide opportunity gaps across the state, with some schools offering 10 or more AP courses and with others, particularly in our urban districts, offering few or none.~~

~~This grant is helping Providence and other communities to close the opportunity gap and to provide rigorous and challenging courses to all students. Providence, in particular, has made and fulfilled a commitment to offer AP courses in each of its high schools.~~

During the 2010-11 school year, 3,102 Rhode Island public-school students took AP exams, an increase of 13.8 percent over the prior year. Students took a total of 4,956 exams, an increase of 11.3 percent. According to a report from the College Board, the range of AP course offerings varied widely across the state last year, with Classical High School (an exam-entry school in Providence) offering 19 courses, Portsmouth High School offering 16 courses, Barrington High School offering 14 courses, and North Kingstown High School offering 12 courses. At the other extreme, some high schools in Providence and in other urban communities offered only 1 or 2 AP courses.

~~Recognizing this inequity, the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust was inspired to make the aforementioned grant to Rhode Island by Commissioner Gist’s commitment to ensuring that all students in Rhode Island will be prepared to succeed in postsecondary education, careers, and life.~~

~~Despite these improvements, we still see wide opportunity gaps across the state, with some schools offering 10 or more AP courses and with others, particularly in our urban districts, offering few or none. To that end, continuing to expand advanced coursework remains a statewide priority.~~

In addition, the Rhode Island Department of Education, in conjunction with the Office of Higher Education, has established a Dual Enrollment Policy Development Committee. This committee, comprised of over a dozen representatives from K-16 and with national experts, is charged with the development a comprehensive dual enrollment policy for Rhode Island Board of Education adoption. The resulting dual enrollment policy, which will be ready for adoption by school districts ~~by~~for the 2015-2016 school year, will focus on dramatically expanding post-secondary readiness and attendance rates, reducing the per pupil costs of dual enrollment credits, and streamlining the administrative management of dual enrollment.

To further ensure that Rhode Island students are prepared for college, careers, and life, Rhode Island has adopted progressive, rigorous, balanced, and widely heralded graduation requirements. Beginning in 2003, Rhode Island embarked upon a statewide secondary reform agenda that resulted in the development of an innovative

performance-based component to the statewide graduation requirements. Over the past nine years, this system has undergone regular refinement. Now called *The Rhode Island Diploma System*, Rhode Island's graduation requirements reflect a clear set of policy goals:

- 1. Set a high and common standard for graduation.** The regulations set high academic standards and measure student performance through coursework and the state assessment. Students are required to complete four years of English and math and three years of science instruction. At the same time, the Diploma System requires that LEAs teach students the essential 21st-century skills – teamwork, innovation, problem-solving, and communication – and are assessed through senior projects and portfolios.
- 2. Value and recognize all aspects of student achievement equally.** Rhode Island is not a state that recognizes and values only the state assessment. Students must meet state and local requirements on all three of the graduation requirements: state assessments, coursework, and performance-based assessments. No single element is more or less important than the others.
- 3. Require intensive intervention for students and reward them for growth.** Rather than establishing a single cut score on the state assessment, Rhode Island's graduation requirements focus on promoting growth for students who are at risk for academic failure. The regulations require schools and districts to provide additional support and interventions for struggling students.
- 4. Honor students who achieve at high levels.** Students achieving at high levels are eligible to earn a Regents' commendation. All students are eligible to earn this distinction through a diploma system that rewards excellence and inspires all students to do their best work.

~~In February 2011, the Rhode Island Board of Regents voted to clarify and strengthen the role of the state assessment as one of the three measures within Rhode Island's Diploma System. Under these new Newly revised graduation requirements, for students in the Class of 2014—the rising juniors—2020 require that they will be responsible for reaching a performance level on the state assessment that corresponds to student readiness to enter community college without remediation. RIDE has been working closely with community-based organizations, school districts to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of and preparing for this change. This outreach effort has included and will continue to include brochures, frequently asked questions, and student letters in multiple languages. The strengthened role of the state assessments as part of Rhode Island's multiple measure system is designed to ensure that *all* Rhode Island graduates are prepared for the challenges they face beyond high school.~~

~~The Rhode Island Diploma System has been fully deployed over the 2012-2014 period and is in full force for the graduating Class of 2014. RIDE staff, in conjunction with school districts and the Rhode Island Board of Education, have been closely monitoring student success in meeting the new graduation requirements. As of May 1, 2014, 93% of Rhode Island's current seniors had met the graduation requirement. The impact of the graduation requirements has been profound: every district in Rhode Island has expanded their educational services to students at risk of failure, with the majority of the efforts focusing on increasing instructional time dedicated to math instruction, adding intervention programming for students at risk of failure, and offering after-school and summer support.~~

RIDE places a strong emphasis on the role of technical education as one element of a portfolio of portable skills that will ensure student success in college, careers, and life. Beginning in May 2011, RIDE began a comprehensive redesign of the statewide system of career and technical education. This redesign began with the rewriting of the career and technical education regulations, a set of regulations that were over 20 years old. Under the new regulatory scheme, career and technical education is staged to play a prominent role secondary education in Rhode Island. The revised regulations focus on:

1. Preparing learners for postsecondary education and careers resulting in employment that provides family-sustaining wages;
- ~~1.~~ Supporting students' postsecondary success through planning, credentialing, industry partnerships, and articulation with higher education and training programs; ~~and,~~
- ~~2.~~
- ~~3-2.~~ Investing in high-quality, highly effective career preparation programs through a diverse statewide delivery system.

Under the newly designed system of career and technical education, LEAs will be required to provide all students access to rigorous technical programs of study that yield industry-recognized credentials and promote student access into post-secondary education and training programs. The redesign of the system, coupled with the prospect of increased state funding, will help Rhode Island meet our goal of serving 30% of students in technical education programs.

In addition to the expansion of high quality, industry-specific career and technical education programs, RIDE is leading a multi-agency, statewide effort to adopt a work-readiness credential. When formalized, this credential will be earned concurrently with a diploma and will focus on providing students with direct instruction on workplace skills. RIDE, along with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, the Governor's Workforce Board, and the local Chambers of Commerce have joined forces to ensure that the credential is useful, recognized, and connected to rigorous and meaningful instruction and career-readiness training for secondary school students.

During the 2012-2014 period, RIDE ~~has~~ expanded CTE offerings and focused upon improving program quality. This ~~has~~ included the redesign of CTE accountability and establishment of new data collections designed to answer the following questions:

1. How many students that start rigorous CTE programs persist and complete the program?
2. How many students enrolled in rigorous CTE programs earn (a) industry-recognized credentials, and/or (b) post-secondary credits, and/or (c) advanced standing in post-secondary education and training programs?
3. How many students enrolled in rigorous CTE programs graduate from high school?
4. What is the fiscal efficiency of Rhode Island CTE programs?
5. How many students that complete rigorous CTE programs enroll and persist in post-secondary education or training programs?

The metrics associated with each of these questions are now collected at the level of individual programs, enabling RIDE to incorporate student-level results into both a state-run program approval process and to establish a system of performance-based funding.

~~Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option.~~

### 1.C High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth

<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>	<b>Option C</b>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p> <p><u>i.1.</u> Attach the State’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p><u>i.1.</u> Provide the SEA’s plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned,</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the</p>



	high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)
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**Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

***2A Develop and Implement a System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support***

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA’s plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Rhode Island’s accountability system, proposed and accepted under the 2012 waiver and modified in 2014 to account for the transition to PARCC and the National Centers and State Collaborative Alternate Assessment (NCSC) assessments, has been implemented for three consecutive years to date. During this period we have learned a great deal about our Composite Index Score (CIS) as well as the naming of and interactions with schools identified as Priority, Focus, or Warning. This application seeks to extend the system with some adjustments for the next three years, starting with the 2015-16 school year. We will continue to implement many aspects of the

approved methodology for holding schools accountable while make some necessary adjustments in response to a thorough analysis of our accountability data and incorporating recommendations made by the *Accountability 3.0 Advisory Group*.

As part of preparing for this extension, we established a diverse working group called the Accountability 3.0 Advisory Group. Comprised of educators and community members representing superintendents, principals, school committees, teachers, and representatives from students with disabilities and English learners, this group analyzed past accountability models and made specific recommendations to strengthen our ability to identify and intervene in struggling schools. A more complete explanation of modifications follows in the following sections.

~~Rhode Island's current accountability system was designed to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act, and it has~~Rhode Island's originally approved accountability system was designed to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act, and it served to highlight and expose achievement gaps at all grade levels and among all subgroups in our state. ~~We have learned that schools identified for improvement through this system have very different profiles of performance. Moreover, schools in our suburban school districts centers are held to many fewer targets than their urban counterparts. This phenomenon has allowed many at-risk students in low-incidence populations to go unnoticed in our current system. Rhode Island wants to take advantage of this waiver opportunity to design and implement a system that exposes~~Our first accountability system under this waiver introduced the concept of consolidated subgroups to increase the number of schools being held accountable for traditional NCLB subgroups.

The subgroup sensitivity in accountability was largely successful; through the 2012 federally-approved waiver design, Rhode Island was successful in holding nearly every school in the state accountable for the performance of traditionally underserved populations ~~The original waiver design exposed~~ heretofore hidden gaps in achievement between schools' overall performance and the achievement levels of their at-risk student populations. ~~This perspective, coupled with the experience gained over ten years of NCLB accountability for schools and districts greatly shaped our proposed design in this waiver request. We know that schools identified under our current system are not equal in terms of the magnitude of their gaps, the degrees of under-achievement, or the progress that they are making. We believe~~The experience of the last three years of waiver implementation has deepened our belief that it is essential to implement a system that is more nuanced and sophisticated in order to account for these differences so that we can be certain that the focus and priority schools are, in fact, the most persistently lowest performing in our state. We also are committed to providing more tailored data to schools to differentiate among the majority of schools that fall between our lowest and highest achieving. With these goals in mind, Rhode Island's ~~proposed~~current accountability system includes the following features:

4. Analyzing state testing data in reading English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics Mathematics from different perspectives in order to consider absolute performance, growth, gaps, and achievement at the highest levels of performance. and enable clear differentiation of performance in both content areas;
2. ~~Acknowledging that schools make progress toward targets at different paces that may not completely align to the annual targets set for them. In addition to determining whether targets are met each year, the model determines the amount of progress schools make toward their 2017 goals.~~
- Understanding that operating context affects the challenge of improving student performance toward proficiency and that there should be some recognition for moving students from lowest level of performance into increasingly higher levels. We acknowledge that traditionally low performing groups, (i.e., students in poverty, students with disabilities, and students acquiring English) require targeted efforts to move them toward proficiency and schools are awarded extra points for improving the performance of these subgroups;
  - Acknowledging that every school has a group of students that represent the lowest 25% of performance regardless of the school's overall achievement level. This model takes steps to improve the achievement of this group by positioning the gap closing process to award points when the distance between this lowest 25% of students and their peers in the top fifty percent is closed or narrowed;
  - Stabilizing school classifications is necessary in order for long-term improvement planning. We have a substantial number of smaller schools that bounce among classifications due to small populations of students. In order to prevent this occurrence we are introducing three-year rolling averages which will bring added stability to our measurement system;
  - Recognizing current research that confirms that students with a Growth Score lower than 35 are at academic risk of falling behind. Rather than holding schools accountable using median Growth Scores, we are proposing that schools are held accountable for the proportion of students scoring lower than 35. Further, we are going to calculate this separately for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics rather than combing students into a single metric. This approach will strengthen the accuracy of our measurement system and provide more specific information that can help schools diagnose their strengths and challenges;
  - Incentivizing secondary schools to expand the breadth and quality of their opportunities for students to prepare for post-secondary success through phasing in a metric that assigns values for offering AP exams, industry-recognized credentials, and advanced coursework; and,

~~3.● Featuring graduation rates prominently within all high schools.~~

~~The accountability system proposed and accepted under the 2012 waiver process has been implemented for three consecutive years to date. Much was learned about our Composite Index Score (CIS) as well as our response to schools that were identified as Priority, Focus, or Warning status. This application seeks to extend the system with some adjustments to accommodate Rhode Island's transition to the Partnership for Assessing Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the National Centers and State Collaborative Alternate Assessment (NCSC) in the 2014-15 school year. We will make some minor but necessary adjustments to the process for elementary, middle and highschools.~~

~~A more complete explanation of modifications follows in the following sections.~~

~~Since the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, Rhode Island has preserved the core values of its state accountability system while designing modifications to meet the requirements of the act. Our current accountability system holds all schools in Rhode Island to identical criteria for achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP). We also define improvement for all schools in a rigidly consistent manner. We incorporated the provisions of the NCLB accountability guidelines regarding AYP into the Rhode Island accountability system in order to achieve compliance. Prior to the waiver, we used an indexing of proficiency to make AYP determinations in order to classify schools. We established baselines for every school and LEA based on assessment data combined over three consecutive years.~~

For parents and the public, NCLB produced three significant benefits:

- ~~4.i.~~ NCLB both forced and helped states to build robust data systems to support increased accountability requirements in ways that helped schools and districts get the data they need to improve outcomes for students.
- ~~2.ii.~~ NCLB shone a much-needed light on previously under-served populations, such as low-income children, whose test scores can be masked when looking at overall school performance.
- ~~3.iii.~~ “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) gave the public a sense of whether individual schools were making progress in their efforts to improve curriculum, the quality of their teaching, school climate, and parent engagement, to cite some examples. achievement among the traditional NCLB subgroups.

Conversely, NCLB created a series of inequities that actually served to impede meaningful reforms in under-performing schools. The rigid nature of single, statewide AYP measures based solely on the percent of students scoring “proficient” or better made it difficult to gauge whether student achievement was improving in schools with low test scores. ~~Fairly large~~ Large “n” sizes and uneven distribution of at-risk populations meant that some schools faced up to four times as many targets as others. ~~Overly prescribed interventions and limitations that drove the use of funding often led to~~

~~improvement efforts that had little effect.~~ The inability of our NCLB accountability system to measure normative achievement gaps, or ~~to~~ measure the size of criterion-based gaps, made prescribing appropriate reforms difficult. Over time, NCLB requirements unintentionally became barriers to state and local implementation of differentiated supports, interventions, and rewards for our schools and LEAs.

### **Developing a State System System and Plan to Improve Achievement, Close Gaps, Improve Instruction**

Rhode Island has proposed a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system to be implemented immediately using its **Fall 2014/Spring 2015** state assessment results.

RIDE is embracing the opportunity that this flexibility request provides to redesign our accountability framework ~~in a manner designed~~ to ensure that all schools get the differentiated supports they need and deserve, as prescribed in state statute, articulated in our strategic plan (2009), and memorialized in the Rhode Island Basic Education Program regulations, which became effective on July 1, 2010. ~~These policies That original intent is now deeply informed by multiple years of implementation and structures provide coincides with the final year of implementing our five year Strategic Plan, Transforming Education in Rhode Island.~~ Rhode Island currently is engaging its residents by asking them to shape the next five year strategic plan. Our approach is unprecedented in its reach and levels of inclusion statewide. The strategic plan will offer our state with a roadmap for systemic, sustained improvement that, when coordinated with flexibility regarding NCLB requirements and supported with Race to the Top-funded systems, will elevate our schools and LEAs this waiver extension will help to unprecedented improve achievement levels and student outcomes.

~~Since her arrival in 2009, Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's passion for excellence in education and her commitment to reform has transformed RIDE and every facet of the education system in the state. In her first year as commissioner, she visited every school district and met with parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, and policy-makers across the state. The outcome of this was the completion and adoption of our current strategic plan, Transforming Education in Rhode Island. The strategic plan outlines outlined our five-year plan for improving outcomes for all students. The five priorities, which align with this request for flexibility, are were:~~

1. Ensure Educator Excellence;
2. Accelerate All Schools Toward Greatness;
3. Establish World-Class Standards and Assessments;
4. Develop User-Friendly Data Systems; and
5. Invest Our Resources Wisely.

Our new priorities are emerging but not finalized. Central to the process is the commitment to ensure that all constituents - educators, policy makers, business leaders, parents, and students are working together to ensure that all students graduate college and career ready.

Incorporated in our strategic plan are the tenets of the Basic Education Program. The Basic Education Program (BEP) is a set of regulations that the Board of Regents promulgated pursuant to its delegated, statutory authority to determine standards for the Rhode Island public-education system in order to ensure the maintenance of local appropriation to support high quality education offerings for all students ~~as required by the BEP.~~ The purpose of the BEP is to ensure that every public-school student has equal access to a high quality, rigorous, and equitable array of educational opportunities, expressed as a guaranteed and viable curriculum, from PK-12. In order to effectuate meaningful implementation of improved instructional practice, as articulated in the BEP, RIDE must fulfill 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.

One of the more salient aspects of our experience working with under-performing schools is the need to clarify the distinct roles ~~that of~~ the SEA and local district leadership ~~play~~. Limiting the RIDE role to the four functions listed above was a direct effort to reduce conflicting messages coming into a school and to clarify appropriate roles and responsibilities in order to help promote execution of core strategies with fidelity.

Accordingly, the BEP assigns a very different set of functions to the local education agency (LEA). The BEP, completely revised for 2010 so as to be based on output and outcome measures, is organized around seven LEA functions. These seven functions are research-based categories of LEA functioning that lead to student success. [See Appendix B for more information on the seven functions.] Each LEA is required to fulfill

the requirements of the seven core functions in order to ensure that all of its schools are providing an adequate education to every student:

- a) *Lead the Focus on Learning and Achievement:* The LEA shall provide on-site direction that continuously guides site-based leadership; identify expectations and accountability for implementation of proven practices; and address barriers to implementation of identified educational goals.

- b) *Recruit, Support, and Retain Highly Effective Staff:* The LEA shall recruit, identify, mentor, support, and retain effective staff; build the capacity of staff to meet organizational expectations; and provide job-embedded professional development based on student need.
- e) *Guide the Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:* The LEA shall provide access to rigorous, guaranteed, and viable curricula for all students; ensure differentiated instructional strategies, materials, and assessments; and build systems that provide opportunities for common planning and assessment.
- e) *Use Information for Planning and Accountability:* The LEA shall develop and implement proficiency-based comprehensive assessment systems; distribute results of measured school progress and student performance; and maintain responsive and accessible information systems.
- e) *Engage Families and the Community:* The LEA shall implement effective family and community communication systems; engage families and the community to promote positive student achievement and behavior; and provide adult and alternative learning opportunities integrated with community needs.
- f) *Foster Safe and Supportive Environments for Students and Staff:* The LEA shall address the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students; ensure safe school facilities and learning environments; and require that every student has at least one adult accountable for his or her learning; and,
- g) *Ensure Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources:* The LEA shall identify and provide requisite resources to meet student needs; allocate fiscal and human resources based on student need; and overcome barriers to effective resource allocation at the school level.

~~Describing the relative functions of the SEA and LEA carries with it an enormous benefit beyond its conceptual construct. The focus on functionality lends itself to an examination of how well an LEA needs to be performing in order to achieve a desired or requisite level of efficacy. RIDE literature often repeats the adage that the most important aspect of data-driven decision-making is the **decision** itself. Our unrelenting emphasis on critical decisions has allowed us to focus on the relevance of the data we collect. Data must be relevant to the decisions that need to be made. Improving the level of functioning within the systems that make up a school or LEA requires a series of well-informed decisions. Too often, resources, including human resources, are distributed through the education system without regard to improving core functional capacities. The BEP provides a framework within which we can make decisions against a backdrop of clear expectations coupled with consistent performance measures.~~

Through this waiver design and submission, RIDE has made a series of commitments that are predicated on a profound belief in the value of an unflinching and valid measurement and accountability system and upon bold, data-driven reform at district and school levels. RIDE is committed to re-inventing its system of measuring school performance in order to build a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that actually informs the decisions that administrators and teachers need to

make to improve teaching and learning. RIDE is committed to maximizing the knowledge and insight that can be mined from student performance data in order to facilitate meaningful decision-making and in turn, improve student outcomes. Finally, RIDE is committed to the development of a system that uncovers Rhode Island's most acute performance problems and most inspiring successes with equal, unflinching rigor. Rhode Island's waiver extension application contains both surprising and, in places, controversial design decisions. But in every instance, those design decisions can be traced back to these commitments and a profound philosophical investment in the power of data, classification, and differentiated accountability and intervention.

Rhode Island educators need more accurate information ~~about exactly where student outcomes have been, at all levels and~~ over time – not just the percentage of students achieving proficiency. We are determined to shine the brightest and most focused possible light on achievement gaps among disaggregated groups of students. We need a sharp focus on low-incidence populations and we also want greater consistency in the number of targets schools face. Our commitment to multiple measures demands both single-year static measures and measures that reveal trends over time. As this aspect of our system became more complex, we made the decision to limit our school-classification system to the multiple measures available to us from the use of student-performance data. In turn, this allowed us much greater flexibility to turn to a wider range of qualitative and quantitative measures to guide the sequencing and intensity of support and interventions.

This flexibility extension request provides Rhode Island with a unique opportunity to bring ~~new~~increased levels of accuracy and equity to the manner in which we measure school performance. When we developed our first generation NCLB accountability structure, RIDE looked at several factors before deciding on an  $n$  size of 45 for purposes of holding schools responsible for disaggregated student populations. We felt it was important at the time to minimize Type I and Type II errors given that schools would be identified for sanctions if they failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in any of their targets. This condition is no longer applicable in our current plan. Schools that fail to meet their annual targets do not necessarily ~~have to be identified for improvement, result in identification for improvement. Rather, they will be provided an~~ Alert that calls attention to the specific area of concern. We would also like to use the same  $n$  size for our other systems and reporting within the state. A value of 20 provides a more than adequate level of validity and reliability for accountability decisions. Just as important, lowering our  $n$  size ~~further~~has furthered our policy goal of accurately identifying where significant achievement gaps exist, even in relatively low-incidence student populations.

As more fully explained below, Rhode Island is ~~also~~ proposing to discontinue the use of “consolidated subgroups” ~~to bring a so that we can focus more inclusive approach on the lowest performing group of students in each school regardless of its composition. This change does not diminish our commitment to measuring focusing on traditionally underserved populations. Indeed, an analysis of students in the lowest 25% confirms that the composition of this group is statistically over-represented by students of color, those living in poverty, student performance at the school level. Our preliminary runs~~

reveal that our suburban schools will generally be required to meet additional AMO's, whereas our urban schools will generally face fewer, consolidated AMO's. Of course, our with disabilities, and English learners. With small exceptions, these students constituted the students identified in our Consolidated Subgroups with the benefit of including every school. We will offer two reporting mechanisms. The first will be our public facing report cards. We will also build a diagnostic reporting system will still break performance down for schools and LEAs that will disaggregate the lowest performing 25% of students into the disaggregations that comprise each consolidated subgroupNCLB subgroups, so as to ensure a completely accurate and unflinching picture of student performance. Further, any school that misses an AMO for three consecutive years will automatically be placed in the Warning Classification.

- (1) Our public facing report cards, which will include the continued reporting of AMOs for students in each subgroup;
- (2) A diagnostic reporting system for schools and LEAs that will disaggregate the lowest performing 25% of students into the NCLB subgroups, so as to ensure a completely accurate and demographically accurate picture of student performance.

**The Rhode Island plan will improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction.**

RIDE proposes a multi-tiered accountability system that will not only more accurately identify improving schools, but will also ensure that all Rhode Island students are measured against the highest-performing students in the state. There are ~~seven~~four components to our proposed accountability system with room to add a fifth as data becomes available. The overarching goal is to ensure that schools can no longer mask underperformance of students who face special challenges. ~~The accountability system under the ESEA waiver emphasized schools that succeeded in elevating a large proportion of their students to our highest proficiency level, proficient with distinction. A parallel metric will be established for schools using the highest proficiency level on the PARCC tests. This will be set at "Level 5," and a label has not yet been determined. Only by drawing attention to our lowest and highest performers can we hope to diagnose and properly treat our struggling schools while leveraging the best thinking of those schools that have consistently and successfully prepared students for success in college, careers, and life. By drawing attention to our lowest and highest performers we can diagnose and intervene in our struggling schools.~~

The components of RIDE's proposed accountability system are as follows ~~There are some noted differences for schools as the accountability system will respond to differences in the PARCC assessment as these schools establish baselines using the 2014-2015 PARCC results:~~

2. Improve the absolute proficiency of all students in all schools in reading and mathematics (minority, free/reduced-price lunch, English Learners, students with disabilities); Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics;

- ~~Reduce the percent of students not proficient in mathematics Mathematics and reading English Language Arts/Literacy in half by 2016-17 2020-21 in all schools and LEAs (All Students). This metric will not be used in 2014-2015 as the PARCC assessment will establish baselines;~~

~~3. Report progress on which annual targets will be established;~~

- 4. • ~~Set individualized school-specific and district-specific level Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for all schools in reading English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics Mathematics for the all student groups and for all subgroups and programs (minority, (race/ethnicity, free/reduced-price lunch, English Learners learners, students with disabilities). Schools, lowest 25%). All schools will have AMOs established in the 2014-15 school year using the PARCC assessment results;~~

Recognize

~~5. Reduce the number of schools that exceed proficiency standards in reading and mathematics (All Students) with higher than expected percentages of students with~~

- 6. • ~~Improve growth in reading scores of lower than 35 in English language arts and mathematics in all elementary and middle schools (All Students, minority, free/reduced-price lunch, English Learners learners, students with disabilities);~~

~~7. • Reduce the percent of students not graduating by half by 2016-17 2020-21, using 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year cohort graduation calculations and set graduation-rate Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) targets (All Students); and~~

~~8. Increasing high-school scaled score growth on the NECAP mathematics and reading assessments will not be used in 2014-2015 as this year's results will provide baseline data from which we can measure growth in future years.~~

~~It is important to note that, in all instances, our proposed accountability system is in alignment with—or more rigorous than—the targets that we articulated in the Rhode Island Race to the Top goals.~~

- Increase the number of students graduating from high-school with an earned post-secondary credential when data are available.

The following parameters remain essentially unchanged in this proposed accountability system, ~~excepting for a few temporary modifications necessitated by the transition to PARCC assessments~~:

- The definition of public school for accountability purposes is the same definition as public school for general purposes in Rhode Island: “A publicly funded school, operated by a local city or town school committee or school board, or operated by the State through a Board of Trustees, or a public charter school established pursuant to Chapter 77 of Title 16 of the General Laws, or a school program operated by the Department for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).”

- Our existing state assessment program is implemented statewide and legislatively mandated through The Paul W. Crowley Student Investment Initiative. (RIGL 16-7.1) We administer assessments annually, ~~assessing students in grades 3 through 8 plus grade 11 in reading and mathematics and assessing writing in grades 5, 8, and 11 using the NECAP assessments.~~ The ~~NECAP~~ PARCC assessments in both ~~reading and mathematics~~ content areas report student results in the following categories for all schools: Distinguished Performance (5), Strong Performance ~~Proficient with Distinction~~ (4), ~~Proficient~~ Moderate Performance (3), ~~Partially Proficient~~ Partial Performance (2), and ~~Substantially Below Proficient~~ Minimal Performance (1). Rhode Island ~~will transition~~ transitioned to the PARCC tests ~~in the 2014-15 school~~ this year and ~~administer the PARCC Literacy tests to students, 2015. Students~~ in grades 3-10 take the PARCC English Language Arts/Literacy tests and the PARCC Mathematics tests are given to students in grades 3-8 with students in high school ~~taking~~ take the PARCC ~~test~~ tests aligned to their math course, (i.e., Algebra I or Geometry ~~→~~). Middle school students who are taking Algebra I or Geometry courses may also take the related PARCC assessment in lieu of their grade assigned mathematics test.
- InfoWorks Live! (formerly, *Information Works*) is Rhode Island's state report card. ~~In the current (2011-12) school year,~~ InfoWorks will continue to include assessment data, teacher-quality information, ~~disaggregations,~~ and ~~survey data~~ disaggregation, on students, teachers, parents, and administrators.
- Rhode Island's Instructional Support System is adding an accountability report on the platform that will allow educators to drill down into each metric to support further analyses and diagnostic strategies. This tool is being added at the request of our Educator Evaluation Advisory Group as part of their desire to more deeply understand their accountability data.
- All students in Rhode Island public schools are tested according to statewide policy. Students may participate with or without accommodations, and students with disabilities who qualify (less than 1 percent of the student population) may take the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment. Rhode Island is a member of the NCSC consortium and is administering the NCSC Alternate Assessment this school year. Rhode Island includes these results in its accountability system. Students who have been in the state prior to the October 1 enrollment count of the ~~prior~~ current year for high school or the current year for PARCC are included in the accountability system. ~~Students who arrive in an LEA or school~~ EL students arriving after ~~the October 1 enrollment count of~~ June 30th prior to the ~~prior~~ testing year are ~~included in the state assessment reports but excluded from the accountability system~~ considered newly arrived for testing purposes. Our proposal does request a waiver from including newly arrived ELs (less than one academic year) from the ~~fall~~ mathematics assessment in the same way they are excluded from the reading assessments as allowed under NCLB. ~~Most students who are new to the country begin schools in September and have very little time to become oriented to their new academic performance before beginning NECAP~~

~~testing on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The PARCC mathematics assessment is language rich. There is a Spanish translation but no other language is currently supported.~~

- Rhode Island will continue to report disaggregated data by ESEA subgroups for all schools and will continue to determine whether each subgroup meets the AMO.
- We apply consistently statewide the criterion for defining what constitutes a “full academic year.” The full academic year is set at the October 1 enrollment-count date (which is the date designated in state law to calculate state aid to districts). ~~For NECAP tests that students take in October, we assign scores to the location of each student at the end of the prior school year.~~ The full academic year is then defined as being enrolled in the same school (or LEA) from October 1 to the end of that ~~prior~~current school year. Students who have been continuously enrolled are counted. Students who have not been continuously enrolled at the school but have remained in the LEA (in another school) are counted in the LEA ~~AYP.~~ A student who is not in the school or LEA for a continuous entire school year will not be counted for school level or LEA accountability but will be reported in the state results.
- The state assessment system draws from a department-wide demographic system in which each student has a centrally recorded racial category, IEP or 504 status, English Learner status, and free or reduced-price lunch status. This system enables RIDE to determine the proficiency levels of each student subgroup. We have an individual-student identifier system, which makes possible a calculation of subgroup participation rates and has improved the accuracy of disaggregated data. RIDE will continue to calculate the proficiency levels and participation rates of disaggregated subgroups within each school and LEA.
- We review LEAs at three levels (elementary, middle, high school) and subject LEAs to the same AMO requirements as schools.
- ~~The U.S. Department of Education has approved the Rhode Island assessment system. The vendors for these assessments have produced technical studies, which demonstrate validity, reliability and psychometric integrity of the assessments. The assessments were aligned with our content standards. RIDE will subject the new~~RIDE has and will continue to subject the PARCC to the same technical rigor as we have done with current assessments.

Over the course of the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, LEAs across the four NECAP states ~~will be transitioning to the Common Core State Standards. Although the pace and sequencing of changes to curriculum and instruction will vary across LEAs and schools within and across the NECAP states, all four states expect LEAs and schools to be prepared to fully implement the Common Core State Standards during the 2013-14 school year. During the transition period, we will continue to administer the NECAP reading, writing, and mathematics assessments in the fall of 2012 and 2013, and these assessments will remain aligned with our current standards (GLEs and~~

GSEs). transitioned to the Common Core State Standards. Rhode Island's initial transition is now complete: all districts have migrated from the NECAP to PARCC, which will form the basis for future accountability decisions.

## Student Achievement

### Developing a consistent and logical approach to our accountability design

The manner in which Rhode Island's proposed accountability system differs from the current accountability system and how it will better ensure success for all Rhode Island students is set forth in this section. One of the most limiting aspects of NCLB is the manner in which targets, school performance and interventions are conflated into a "one size fits all" model. The initial flexibility waiver ~~allows~~allowed states to separate the setting and attainment of AMO's as a measure of proficiency from the measurement of school performance: within the index. It further ~~allows~~allowed states to establish a truly diagnostic approach to determining school-specific supports and interventions that reflect both more accurate measures of school performance and other critical readiness factors that impact improvement efforts. Rhode Island's continues to commit to a plan that is specifically designed to maximize these critical areas of flexibility in order to accelerate improvement in our lowest performing schools.

Rhode Island's current Strategic Plan ~~includes, concluding in June of this year, included~~ a set of goals for all districts, schools, and subgroups in the state: to reduce the proficiency gap by half by 2017, thus reducing by half the proportion of students who are not college and career ready. We are in the midst of developing a new Strategic Plan that will carry us through 2020. The Plan will include specific and measurable goals and objectives which will be finalized in June of this year and its contents will inform not only RIDE's Strategic Plan but also those of LEAs and other organizations that choose to align themselves with this strategic vision.

Within this extension request Rhode Island proposes to re-establish Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for each school in the state using ~~this~~prior methodology. The AMOs, which are set by subtracting baseline data, (2014-15 PARCC), from 100 and dividing that number in half and then into six equal intervals, will extend to 2021 with the goal of accelerating the learning of their lowest-performing students. Meeting this goal will require all schools and districts to accelerate progress for all students, particularly those who are furthest behind. Through the hard work and dedication of their teachers and students, many Rhode Island schools and districts have demonstrated substantial progress in ~~addressing their proficiency gaps. To measure progress toward that goal and classify schools in an accountability and assistance level, we are proposing to create a Composite Index Score, (CIS), which combines a set of metrics that include our current best indicators of progress towards college and career readiness: progress on gap-closing as measured by our state assessments in reading and mathematics.~~

~~AMO targets will be differentiated for each district, school, and subgroup depending on its starting point in the baseline year, 2010–11, with the goal in each case to cut in half the proportion of students who are not on track to college and career readiness (performing at least at the Proficient level). As a result, districts, schools, and subgroups that are furthest behind are expected to make the strongest gains and thus close achievement gaps. AMO targets will be reestablished for elementary, middle, and high schools in 2014-15 based on baseline data from PARCC testing.~~

addressing their proficiency gaps but not to the level that we expected. This application considers what we've learned about the work necessary to address achievement gaps while raising achievement as well as better ways to measure progress. We will continue using a Composite Index Score, (CIS), with a more elegant and diagnostically supportive set of metrics that include our current and new best indicators of progress towards college-and career readiness.

Rhode Island schools will continue to issue and report Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) determinations by establishing school specific AMOs for students in the aggregate, low-income students, students with disabilities, English ~~Learners~~learners, and the state's major racial and ethnic subgroups. ~~Elementary, middle, and high schools will use 2014-15 PARCC assessments to establish baseline data from which~~The AMOs will require each school specific to be publicly accountable for accelerating the learning of their lowest-performing students. The AMOs will be set in the fall of 2015 when PARCC data are available. This process will be used to determine AMOs for each school and subgroup. Annual district and school reports will be available on our web site and included in our *InfoWorks!* report cards for each school and district. Schools that persistently fail to attain AMOs ~~will~~may be placed into one of RIDEs ~~three~~two lowest accountability levels (~~Warning~~, Priority or Focus). In addition, RIDE will continue to report out the Attendance Rates for our K-8 schools on our school and district report cards, ~~although Attendance will no longer be used for accountability purposes. For the~~The 2014-15 ~~accountability~~classification process ~~we will hold~~held constant those schools previously identified as Priority and Focus ~~schools~~Schools.

Using ~~these~~ school-specific AMOs as a baseline, Rhode Island's accountability system is based on an index comprised of ~~seven~~four metrics. ~~Each~~An additional metric ~~divides the range of scores,~~ "Post-Secondary Credentials" will be added as data becomes available. Metrics will be divided into three to five levels of performance, depending upon the data generated by the baseline data. These ~~five~~ levels will allow us to distinguish among the span of performance within in each metric so that we can, properly identify schools at the extreme margins and to make the scoring system more differentiated in the middle. ~~Each of Rhode Island's schools and districts will have an index score ranging from 20 to 100 points. The scores~~ Scores will be earned within each of ~~seven~~five components. When each of the ~~7~~four weighted components are added together, the result is the schools' and districts' score is out of 100.

Table 21 below provides a summary of the ~~seven~~four components and the weights assigned to each measure or metric. Revised weights will be determined when the “Post-Secondary Credential” metric is available. The individual scores from each subcomponent will be added together to arrive at a total score for each school. Also, we will no longer use the metrics, Percent in Distinction and the Progress to 2017 Target since these have been incorporated or captured into our newly defined metrics. We will then rank the schools by this total score ~~(20-100)~~ in order to begin the identification process for priority, focus, and commended schools. Beyond these seven metrics, the classifications will factor in an individual subgroup AMOs will be calculated and reported publicly each year. Schools that missed~~miss~~ an AMO for three consecutive years, any significant gaps in performance, and participation rates in reading and mathematics, at the district, school, state, and subgroup levels. will not be eligible to be classified as a Commended School.

**Table 2: ESEA Flexibility Design Weights**

Table 1: ESEA Flexibility Design Weights

Measure	Components	Elementary / Middle Schools	High Schools
<del>Absolute Percent Proficient</del> <u>Weighted Proficiency Score</u>	All Students Minority + Poverty IEP + ELL	3440	3440
<del>Progress To 2017 Target</del>	All Students		
<del>Consolidated Subgroup Closing Gaps in Student Performance Gaps Against Performance Reference Group</del>	Minority+PovertyBotto m 25% vs. Top 50%	3430	3430
	IEP+EELL		
<u>Growth</u>		30	0
<del>Percent of Tested students in Distinction Level</del>	AllPercent of Students with SGPs less than 35	6	6
<u>Growth</u>	All Students	26	0
	Minority+Poverty		
	IEP+EELL		
HS Graduation Rates	All Students		2630
<del>HS Scaled Score Change</del> <u>Post-Secondary Credential</u>	All Students	-NA	TBD

TOTAL		100	100

The ~~composite index score~~Composite Index Score (CIS) provides sufficient data to place schools and districts into one of ~~three-five~~ levels so that RIDE can provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and supports. ~~RIDE will calculate new index scores using the 2014-2015 PARCC data but it will not assign labels beyond those that are federally required, (i.e. Commended, Focus, and Priority).~~ The levels are:

- 1. Commended Schools
- 2. Leading Schools
- 3. Schools in Good Standing (with or without Alerts)
- ~~2.4.~~ Focus Schools
- ~~3-5.~~ Priority Schools

Cut points within each category ~~were~~will be assigned within the following framework:

- ~~1.~~i. The highest levels of performance reflect current achievement data in each category. They outline achievable yet aspirational goals for each school.
- ~~2.~~ii. The lowest levels of performance also reflect the current unacceptably low data we have in each category.
- ~~3.~~iii. The middle ranges attempt to differentiate among the ranges of school performance based on the most recent data sets we have for schools.

Our current accountability system ~~allows~~under our ESEA waiver incorporated many ~~more~~ schools – particularly in our suburbs – ~~to mask~~be held accountable for the poor performance of our most vulnerable students; those with disabilities and English Learners.~~learners. We accomplished this by introducing consolidated subgroups into our system.~~

With three years of experience and data we are now seeking to further improve our system based on lessons learned. Our subgroup metric in particular produced unintended consequences in cases where LEA performance was so low that no appreciable gaps existed. This was most present in small districts with few schools. The second concern was that our consolidated subgroups resulted in some students being “counted” within three subgroups, (all students, program subgroup, and poverty/minority subgroup). Our continued aim is twofold. We want to drive systems to prepare all students to be college and career ready while also attending to our most vulnerable students.

Therefore we propose modifications to three of our existing metrics. The first is to eliminate our consolidated subgroups groups and the related Performance Reference Group used in the CIS. We will replace the Absolute Proficiency Metric with a Weighted Proficiency Metric. The Subgroup Gap Metric is being refined to focus on the lowest

performing students in each school, the lowest 25%. Research also shows that students with student growth percentiles below 35 are at high academic risk if they continue at this level for multiple years. Therefore, we have modified the Student Growth Metric to identify the percent of students in each school that fall within this range of growth.

**Elimination of Performance Reference Groups (PRG):** Our current system introduced the concept of PRGs as a mechanism to include more schools in the accountability system. While this did allow us to include more schools annually, we did observe that many schools moved in and out of accountability as their populations shifted. This phenomenon occurs because many of our schools do not meet introduced some instability into the classifications. Our proposed design eliminates the use of the PRG as currently defined and establishes a group made up of the top 50% of students in each school. This group of students will comprise the yardstick against which we will measure gaps for the lowest 25% of students in each school. We propose to use three-year rolling averages as a way to eliminate the minimum  $n$  size of 45 for each subgroup. Concurrently, many of our urban schools report small performance gaps because factor. Further, our data show us that when schools overall performance is so low at the school level. To account for these two issues, we propose to collapse all reported subgroups into three subgroups and to lower the  $n$  size to twenty students for component analysis. To ensure that gaps are not due to poor overall performance, we also introduce a Performance Reference Group (PRG) for each LEA, which includes the highest performers. Identifying and addressing achievement low that gaps of Rhode Island's most vulnerable students are at the heart of our Strategic Plan as well as our accountability design are negligible or nonexistent. We will control for that by using either state data or another district with similar characteristics. The approach will be confirmed after we analyze our 2015 PARCC data. We will continue to employ 20 as the minimum  $n$  size for all accountability analyses and reporting.

The three consolidated groups used in the CIS and justification for each are described below:

**Performance Reference Group (PRG):** The PRG is made of students who are not economically disadvantaged, not in English Learner (EL) programs and not receiving Individualized Education Program (IEP) Services. This is the highest performing group of students in our state and the group against which all other groups will be compared. The PRG is also the yardstick by which we measure performance gaps within the CIS. A PRG will be set for each LEA for reading and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and, high school levels. The decision was made to implement a consistent approach that would apply to all schools statewide by developing an LEA level comparison rather than a school level comparison because many schools did not have a sufficient population size (i.e.  $n = 20$ ) to calculate subgroup specific gaps.

**Consolidated Program Subgroup:** This subgroup includes English Learners (ELs) including former English Learners that are being monitored and students with disabilities and those students that have been exited from services (including students who take

the alternate assessment). The decision was made to consolidate both programs after exploring other options to ensure that as many students as possible were informing the accountability data for each school and district. Initial analysis was conducted separately for each program. This analysis revealed that many schools and students would not be included in the accountability system because of the minimum  $n$  requirement of 45. We then reduced the  $n$  size to 20 and found that, while it improved our ability to include more schools and students, it was not at a level that captured a sufficient number of Rhode Island's students. Most notably only 29% of schools would be held accountable for the performance of students receiving EL services. This was an improvement but still far too low. By combining two groups into one larger subgroup, the data demonstrates that we are able to hold 81% of schools accountable for the performance of these students. We are confident we will highlight and respond to gaps in student achievement that have been previously overlooked. In nearly eighty-one percent of all Rhode Island schools, there are less than 20 English Learner students. Under the current system, these schools would not be held accountable because of the small  $n$  size. The table below shows that the consolidated subgroup increases the number of schools included in accountability from 54 to 227 for the ELL subgroup and from 211 to 227 for the IEP subgroup.

<b>School Included in Accountability Determination</b>	<b># of Schools</b>	<b>% of Schools</b>
IEP Subgroup	211	78.36
ELL Subgroup	54	19.14
Consolidated ELL and IEP Program Subgroup	227	80.49

In addition to including more schools in the accountability system, we examined the reasonableness of combining the two program groups into one subgroup. The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the correlation or strength of relationship between two variables; in this case performance. As is indicated below, there is a very strong relationship between the individual program subgroups and the consolidated subgroups. We are confident that the consolidated program subgroup is a valid proxy for the individual program groups. Further, we plan to conduct a separate analysis of individual subgroup's performance to identify subgroups that are not meeting their AMOs. This will identify any instances in which the consolidated subgroup masks the performance of subgroups.

<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Reading</b>
IEP Subgroup Proficiency	0.923**	0.928**
Consolidated Program Subgroup Proficiency		
ELL Subgroup Proficiency	0.605**	0.607**
Consolidated Program Subgroup Proficiency		

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level using a two-tailed Pearson Correlation Coefficient

**Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup:**

This consolidated subgroup includes all federal racial minorities as prescribed by the National Forum on Education Statistics (Minority) plus Free and Reduced-price Lunch students (FRL). As with the Consolidated Program Subgroup, combining these groups ensures that these students will be accounted for in low incidence schools. As the table below shows, consolidating Minority and Free/Reduced Lunch students results in the inclusion of 269 of the 282 schools.

<b>School Included in Accountability Determinations</b>	<b># of Schools</b>	<b>% of Schools</b>
Black Subgroup	75	27
Hispanic Subgroup	121	54
Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup	248	88
Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup	269	95

There is a strong correlation in student achievement between poverty and racial/ethnic minorities and we are confident that this further supports the consolidation of these groups.

<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Black Subgroup Proficiency Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Proficiency	0.74**	0.63**
Hispanic Subgroup Proficiency Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Proficiency	0.83**	0.8**
Free/ Reduced Lunch Subgroup Proficiency Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Proficiency	0.97**	0.96**

*\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level using a two-tailed Pearson Correlation Coefficient*

Table 4 below shows selected subgroup performance in our state assessments over the past three years. Apart from the Asian subgroup, each of the other subgroups included in the consolidated subgroups have similar performance. The Asian subgroup performs at a significantly higher level, but their populations are too small to make any difference in the consolidated subgroup performance. Moreover, Asian students in our urban communities have similar performance results as their Black and Hispanic peers, further supporting the case to include Asians in the Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged subgroup.

Although the policy and psychometric rationale behind the combination English learners and students with IEPs is both defensible and sound, RIDE is acutely aware of the challenging and problematic optics of the combination. The waiver development period

included hours of intense internal and external debate that eventually turned on a small set of powerful questions.

*“Is RIDE’s commitment to creating an accurate and sensitive measurement system that truly maximizes school-district responsibility for traditionally underserved students matched with the institutional courage to put forth the design that best meets this goal?”*

*“Can RIDE develop and put forth an application that acknowledges and meaningfully responds to the legitimate historical, perceptual, and educational concerns that are raised through the consolidation of students with IEPs and Els within a single subpopulation?”*

*“Can RIDE engage in earnest, honest dialogue with our local advocacy community and demonstrate that the consolidated subpopulation, though disquieting on its face, will help ensure that all Rhode Island schools are held accountable for our low-incidence, traditionally-underserved subpopulations?”*

When, and only when, it was clear that the answer to each of these difficult questions was “yes” did RIDE submit this waiver application for federal consideration.

**Table 4: Subgroup Performance on NECAP Reading and Math**

Student Groups	Reading						Mathematics					
	’09 % Prof.	’10 % Prof	’10 SE	’11 % Prof	’11 SE	Difference 10-11	’09 % Prof	’10 % Prof	’10 SE	’11 % Prof	’11 SE	Difference 10-11
State Average	70	71	.17	73	.16	+2	54	55	.18	56	.18	+1
Am-Indian	55	56	2.17	57	2.26	+1	38	35	2.08	39	2.22	+4
Asian	75	75	.94	76	.94	+1	62	62	1.04	64	1.05	+2
Black	54	54	.67	57	.65	+2	31	33	.63	35	.62	+2
Hispanic	51	52	.41	53	.40	+2	31	35	.39	36	.38	+1
FRL	55	56	.28	59	.27	+3	37	39	.27	41	.27	+2
IEP	29	29	.43	30	.45	+1	19	19	.37	18	.37	-1
LEP	24	24	.79	25	.70	0(<0.5)	16	17	.65	16	.57	-1
Student Groups	Reading						Mathematics					
	2009 % Prof.	’10 % Prof	2010 SE	’11 % Prof	’11 SE	Difference 2010-2011	’09 % Prof	’10 % Prof	’10 SE	’11 % Prof	’11 SE	Difference 2010-2011
State Average	70	71	.17	73	.16	+2	54	55	.18	56	.18	+1
Am-Indian	55	56	2.17	57	2.26	+1	38	35	2.08	39	2.22	+4
Asian	75	75	.94	76	.94	+1	62	62	1.04	64	1.05	+2
Black	54	54	.67	57	.65	+2	31	33	.63	35	.62	+2
Hispanic	51	52	.41	53	.40	+2	31	35	.39	36	.38	+1

<b>FRL</b>	55	56	-.28	59	-.27	+.1	37	39	-.27	41	-.27	+.2
<b>IEP</b>	29	29	-.43	30	-.45	+.1	19	19	-.37	18	-.37	+.1
<b>LEP</b>	24	24	-.79	25	-.70	0 (<0.5)	16	17	-.65	16	-.57	+.1

**Statewide group performance on NECAP Reading and Mathematics assessments.<sup>2</sup>**

**How We Measure School Performance  
Rhode Island’s Proposed Accountability System**

**Absolute Weighted Proficiency Score:** How many students ~~have attained proficiency or better?~~ are at each performance level beyond the lowest level?

*This measure indicates the percent of students in each school ~~who have attained at each performance level of proficient or better on above Level 1 on~~ the state assessments in mathematics and ~~reading~~ English language arts.*

Rhode Island’s proposed system acknowledges that high academic achievement for all students is the primary goal of our educational enterprise. As such, ~~it~~ Proficiency continues to play a significant role in our revised ESEA flexibility waiver proposal. ~~It will carry~~ carries a weight of ~~thirty-four~~ forty percent (34%) ~~for elementary, middle, and high schools. 40%) in our design.~~ The state ~~will administer~~ administers the PARCC to students in grades 3-~~10~~ 8 in math, reading, and writing ~~and as well as the English I and English II, Algebra I and Geometry and Integrated Mathematics I/II will be administered~~ assessments to students ~~who in high school when they~~ are enrolled in the ~~aligned~~ related course. The expectation is that all students will reach proficiency. Students who are proficient “demonstrate minor gaps in the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to participate and perform successfully in instructional activities aligned with the grade level/ grade span expectations at the current grade level.” PARCC assessments are on track to be college and career ready.

The PARCC assessments’ scale scores and ~~five levels of~~ proficiency levels will be established in the summer of 2015. Approximately one percent of Rhode Island students participate in the Alternate Assessment, our assessment for students with disabilities. Results from these two assessments are combined to determine the absolute percent proficient metric. Our assessments achievement levels are outlined in the ~~table~~ Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Performance Levels on the PARCC Assessments**

**Table 3: Performance Levels on ~~NECAP~~ Assessmentthe PARCC Assessments**

<sup>2</sup>~~With the exception of Standard Errors (SE), all numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number.~~

Level	Description <u>(DRAFT)</u>
Level 4.5	<p><b><u>Proficient with Distinction-Distinguished Performance</u></b></p> <p>Students performing at this level demonstrate <u>a distinguished command of the prerequisite knowledge, skill, and skills needed practices embodied by the standards. They are academically well prepared to participate and excel engage successfully in instructional activities aligned with Grade level and grade span expectations. These students further studies in this content area. They are on-track to succeed in post-secondary endeavors. become academically well prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses without need for remediation.</u></p>
Level 4	<p><b><u>Strong Performance</u></b></p> <p><u>Students performing at this level demonstrate a strong command of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy or Mathematics assessed at their grade level. They are academically prepared to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.</u></p>
Level 3	<p><b><u>Proficient Moderate Performance</u></b></p> <p><u>Students performing at this level demonstrate minor gaps in a moderate command of the knowledge and skills needed to participate and perform successfully in instructional activities aligned with, and practices embodied by the grade span and Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy assessed at their grade level expectations. It is likely that any gaps in the prerequisite knowledge and skills demonstrated by these students can be addressed by the classroom teacher during the course of quality classroom instruction. need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.</u></p>
Level 2	<p><b><u>Partially Proficient-Partial Performance</u></b></p> <p><u>Students performing at this level demonstrate gaps in a partial command of the knowledge and skills needed to participate and perform successfully in instructional activities aligned with, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy assessed at their grade 9-10 GSEs. Additional instructional level. They will need academic support may be necessary for these students to perform engage successfully in courses aligned with grade expectations. further studies in this content area.</u></p>



Level 4	<b>Substantially Below Proficient</b>
Level 1	<b><u>Minimal Performance</u></b> Students performing at this level demonstrate <del>extensive and significant gaps in a</del> <b><u>minimal command</u></b> of the <del>prerequisite knowledge and</del> skills needed to participate and perform, and <del>practices embodied by the</del> <b><u>Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy assessed at their grade level. They will need extensive academic support to engage</u></b> successfully in <del>grade appropriate instructional activities.</del> <b><u>Additional instruction and support is necessary for these students to meet the proficiency standards. further studies in this content area.</u></b>

~~RIDE will calculate the Absolute Percent Proficient metric by determining the percentage of students at or above proficiency for each school and LEA in the state for three groups of students. The Absolute Percent Proficient metric will be computed for all students, students who are in racial or ethnic minority subgroups along with student receiving free or reduced lunch, and for student who receive either IEP or ELL services. These percentages are used to assign points to each school based on derived cut points.~~

~~Reading performance is consistent across all school levels. As such, one set of cut scores was appropriate and relevant to all schools. A goal of ninety percent or higher in reading for all schools is ambitious yet attainable. Schools with fewer than 45% of their students proficient in reading represent the lowest levels of achievement in our state and demonstrate need for intensive support and intervention. Conversely, there has been a wide variation of math performance across school levels. As a result of these variations, there are three sets of cut scores for elementary, middle and high school levels. While the cut points are not normalized, they were selected to take into account historical performance.~~

~~The percent of students who are proficient for each of these groups are independently calculated in reading and then in mathematics. Using their mean scores, these groups are then assigned points from 1 to 5 based on the cut points described in the table below. For the Absolute Proficiency Measure, there are 6 of these values, three for each of the groups from reading and three for each of the groups from mathematics. The average of these six values, which vary from 1 to 5 is then calculated. If the average score is 5, it will translate to all the 30 points for this measure. The equation below is~~

used to assign Absolute Proficiency Measure points in each school. RIDE will review the PARCC assessment data to determine whether new cut points will need to be established based on the results of students.

$$\text{Points Assigned to Absolute Proficiency Measure} = (\text{Average Score} * 30) / 5$$

### Absolute Proficiency Metric Cut Scores

Rhode Island schools will continue to aspire to the goal of all students reaching proficiency or higher and as such, our accountability system will award maximum points to those students reaching those levels. We also recognize that considerable effort is required to move students from the lowest level of performance (Level 1). Based on input from our Accountability Advisory Group, our design acknowledges these challenges by assigning points to students scoring above Level 1 on the PARCC or NCSC assessments. Further, we recognize that more effort is required to move students toward proficiency who live in poverty, students who have disabilities, and students who receive English language services. To acknowledge this reality, these students will be weighted as 1.25 within this metric. Finally, this approach eliminates the double counting of students within a single metric. In our prior model students could be accounted up to three times, (i.e. school wide, program subgroup, and minority/SES subgroup).

**Table: 3 Proficiency Points**

	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>1 Point</u>	<u>Level 2 Points</u>	<u>Level 3 Points</u>	<u>Level 4 Points</u>	<u>Level 5 Points</u>	
<b>Absolute Percent Proficient for All Students and for All Subgroups not in Program</b>	Reading 0		< 45.33	≥ 45, < 60.66	≥ 60, < 80.1	≥ 80, < 90.1	≥ 90
<u>Students in Program*</u>	Elementary Math 0		< 35.1.25 x .33	≥ 35, < 50.1.25 x .66	≥ 50, < 70.1.25 x 1	≥ 70, < 90.1.25 x 1	≥ 90
	Middle Math		< 30	≥ 30, < 50	≥ 50, < 70	≥ 70, < 85	
	HS Math		< 10	≥ 10, < 30	≥ 30, < 45	≥ 45, < 70	

\*Program includes Free and Reduced Price Lunch, IEP, and ELL

RIDE will calculate the Proficiency metric for each school by summing the point assignment for each student and expressing that as a percentage of the maximum points available in the school which could be up to 125 for each content area (English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics). The 40 points assigned to this metric will be

divided evenly between the two content areas. Cut scores will be determined when impact data is available in the Fall 2015. Over time, this process will be extended to include the three year rolling average.

**Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those living in poverty, with disabilities and English Learners?

*This measure indicates whether all student groups in each school are closing achievement gaps. For each school, this measure compares the scores of a high-performing group of students (the top 50%) against the performance of the lowest 25%.*

Our accountability system prior to 2012 allowed many schools – particularly in our suburbs - to mask the poor performance of our most vulnerable students; those living in poverty, students with disabilities and English Learners. This phenomenon occurred because many of our schools were unable to consistently meet the minimum *n* size of 20 for each subgroup. Concurrently, many of our urban schools reported small performance gaps because overall performance was so low at the school level. To account for these two issues, we propose to use a three-year rolling average to ensure that the minimum *n* size is achieved consistently. We define the high performing group within each school as the top 50% using student scaled scores. The gap is established by comparing the average scaled score of this group to the average scaled score of the lowest 25% of students within the school. To mitigate instances when the overall school performance is so low that gaps are negligible; the state or similar schools' top 50% will be used.

This gap closing metric revision supports Rhode Island's strategic vision and commitment to our most vulnerable students. It also focuses conversations on low performance within a school regardless of who comprises that group. That said, we are committed to shedding a light on students in the federally required subgroups in two ways. First, our report cards will continue to include AMO data for each subgroup. Additionally, our Instructional Support System will include an accountability platform whereby educators can drill down into each of the accountability metrics. This feature supports a deeper understanding of and diagnostic use of accountability data.

**Table 4 below Progress:** To what degree is the school approaching its 2017 targets?

*This measure monitors whether each school as a whole is progressing at a pace that will position them to meet its 2017 targets for proficiency levels in mathematics and reading. This measure is not being used in 2014-15. The PARCC assessments will establish baselines for elementary, middle, and high schools. displays the percent of students in each of the NCLB subgroups who participated in the 2013-14 NECAP Mathematics assessment and is used to illustrate the impact of this approach. As the table shows, a higher percentage of our traditionally low performing subgroups are identified in the bottom 25% than in the school as a whole. The data confirms that this methodology allows us to maintain our focus on traditional subgroups and include all students with low performance who may not be part of these subgroups.*

**Table: 4 STUDENT DISBRIBUTION BY NCLB SUBGROUP**  
**2013-14 NECAP Mathematics**

~~Our current accountability system establishes Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) for each subgroup, school, and LEA that is identical within each level of schooling and subject area. Each school and LEA must meet a state target that is based on the 100-percent proficiency goals that No Child Left Behind set for 2014. As such, schools are evaluated in a binary manner as either meeting or not meeting an annual target. In practice some schools miss targets by a small margin while others have made little or no progress at all. Our proposed system addresses this issue by prioritizing schools that have missed gaps by wider margins. We do this by monitoring the percentage of progress each school is making toward its 2017 targets.~~

~~RIDE will establish individualized targets for schools and LEAs that will reduce by 50 percent each school's gap to 100-percent proficiency by 2016-17. In order to perform this calculation, RIDE will use 2010-11 data as a baseline. This metric is measured as follows:~~

- ~~1) Define Gap as the difference in performance between the 2010-11 baseline year and the 2016-17 target.~~
- ~~2) Define Progress as the difference between current year performance and the baseline year of 2010-11.~~
- ~~3) Calculate the metric as  $100 * \text{Progress} / \text{Gap}$~~

~~Each year, schools will be placed into one of five levels. Cut points for the highest level are selected to ensure that schools are on track to meet their 2016-17 targets. The lowest cut point signifies schools that are least likely to meet their 2016-17 targets and will capture schools that lose ground. The intermediate cut points are set to differentiate across the range of progress schools are making towards their 2016-17 targets. The reading and math points (1-5) are averaged to calculate a school score. This component constitutes 10 percent of the weighted accountability system across all 3 levels (EMH).~~

**Progress Metric Cut Scores**

	<u>ELEMENTARY</u>			<u>MIDDLE</u>			<u>HIGH</u>		
	<u>SCH</u>	<u>BOTT</u>	<u>UPP</u>	<u>SCH</u>	<u>BOTT</u>	<u>UPP</u>	<u>SCH</u>	<u>BOTT</u>	<u>UPP</u>
	<u>OOL</u>	<u>OM</u>	<u>ER</u>	<u>OOL</u>	<u>OM</u>	<u>ER</u>	<u>OOL</u>	<u>OM</u>	<u>ER</u>
<u>Group</u>	<u>WID</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>WID</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>WID</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>50%</u>
	<u>E</u>			<u>E</u>			<u>E</u>		

<u>Am Indian</u>			<u>0.59</u>	<u>1.01</u>	<u>0.41</u>	<u>0.62</u>	<u>1.3</u>	<u>0.36</u>	<u>0.61</u>	<u>0.78</u>	<u>0.46</u>	
<u>Asian-</u>	-		<u>3.1</u> Points	<u>2</u> Points	<u>3</u> Points	<u>4</u> Points	<u>5</u> Points	<u>1.4</u>	<u>3.29</u>	<u>3.04</u>	<u>2.12</u>	<u>3.93</u>
<u>Black</u>			<u>7.74</u>	<u>9.13</u>	<u>6.74</u>	<u>6.95</u>	<u>8.76</u>	<u>5.55</u>	<u>9.43</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8.49</u>	
<u>Hispanic</u>			<u>22.19</u>	<u>26.82</u>	<u>19.39</u>	<u>20.92</u>	<u>23.31</u>	<u>19.06</u>	<u>23.36</u>	<u>25.68</u>	<u>20.23</u>	
<u>Progress to 2017 Target</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>&lt;-3</u>	<u>≥3, &lt;0.15</u>	<u>≥0, &lt;8.14</u>	<u>≥0, &lt;0.16</u>	<u>≥160.</u>	<u>0.17</u>	<u>0.01</u>	<u>0.39</u>	<u>0.43</u>	<u>0.35</u>	
<u>White</u>			<u>63.07</u>	<u>57.38</u>	<u>66.62</u>	<u>66.23</u>	<u>61.91</u>	<u>69.33</u>	<u>60.46</u>	<u>56.37</u>	<u>63.72</u>	
<u>Multi-Racial</u>			<u>3.16</u>	<u>3.38</u>	<u>2.93</u>	<u>2.72</u>	<u>3.06</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>2.71</u>	<u>2.63</u>	<u>2.83</u>	
<u>IEP</u>			<u>17.49</u>	<u>39.09</u>	<u>6.47</u>	<u>16.09</u>	<u>40.88</u>	<u>3.26</u>	<u>15.91</u>	<u>38.14</u>	<u>4.21</u>	
<u>LEP</u>			<u>8.5</u>	<u>14.66</u>	<u>5.16</u>	<u>5.85</u>	<u>11.51</u>	<u>2.62</u>	<u>4.59</u>	<u>9.25</u>	<u>1.77</u>	
<u>Econ. Disadv.</u>			<u>48.29</u>	<u>59.95</u>	<u>40.91</u>	<u>44.79</u>	<u>56.9</u>	<u>37.21</u>	<u>43.53</u>	<u>52.65</u>	<u>37.18</u>	

**Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners?

*This measure indicates whether all student groups in each school are closing achievement gaps. For each school, this measure compares the scores of a high-performing group of students (students who are not economically disadvantaged, do not have disabilities, and do not receive EL services.) against the performance of two other student groups: (1) minority students plus students who are economically disadvantaged and (2) students with disabilities plus English Learners.*

Our current accountability system allows many schools—particularly in our suburbs—to mask the poor performance of our most vulnerable students; those with disabilities and English Learners. This phenomenon occurs because many of our schools are unable to meet the minimum *n* size of 45 for each subgroup. Concurrently, many of our urban schools report small performance gaps because overall performance is so low at the

~~school level. To account for these two issues, we propose to collapse all reported subgroups into three subgroups and to lower the *n* size to twenty students. To ensure that gaps are not due to poor overall performance, we also introduce a Performance Reference Group (PRG) for each LEA, which includes the highest performers in the school district. A PRG will be set for each LEA for reading and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and, high school levels. When there are too few students to calculate a PRG or if there is an insignificant gap between the LEA level PRG and its subgroups, a statewide PRG will be used. Identifying and addressing achievement gaps of Rhode Island's most vulnerable students are at the heart of our Strategic Plan as well as our accountability design.~~

~~To arrive at the score for the Gap-Closing metric, we will subtract the Consolidated Minority/ Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup and the Consolidated Program Subgroup from the Performance Reference Group (PRG) for both reading and mathematics. In this instance, reading and mathematics will each receive a score, which translates to 4 scores overall (2 for the Consolidated Program Group gap and 2 for Consolidated Minority/Poverty Group gap). We will then rank the four scores and assign each school a score between 1 and 5. To receive 5 points, a school must have exceptionally small gaps for students. There are a handful of these schools and they represent proof points, and for all other schools in our state this will remain a reach. A score of 1 represents extraordinarily large gaps that reflect the reality of our current data. The identified cut points allow us to differentiate among levels of performance regarding achievement gaps.~~

~~Points Assigned to Subgroup Gap Measures = (Average Score \* 30)/5~~

~~Further, this metric eliminates the concern that students may be captured up to three times within a metric, (whole school, program subgroup, SES/race subgroup). The metric comprises 30 of the 100 points within the CIS. These points will be divided evenly between English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. We will also build toward incorporating a three-year rolling average. Specific cut points will be determined when PARCC impact data are available in the fall 2015.~~

~~This component is heavily weighted **at 30%** within our overall model because RIDE recognizes that overall performance is simply not good enough. Each and every student must be counted – and this can only happen when gaps are addressed at every level and for each and every underserved student. By **consolidating these groups addressing the lowest performing 25% of students in a school** rather than considering **each** student demographic and programmatic group individually, we are able to hold all **but thirteen** schools accountable for **subgroup** proficiency gaps – a clear sign to schools that all students matter. **RIDE will analyze PARCC assessment data to determine whether new cut points need to be established for elementary middle, and high schools.**~~

**Proficiency Gap Metric Cut Scores**

-	-	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
<b>Consolidated Subgroup Gaps against Performance Reference Group</b>	Minority /Poverty math	$\geq 35$	$\geq 30, < 35$	$\geq 20, < 30$	$\geq 10, < 20$	$< 10$
	Minority /Poverty reading					
	Program math	$\geq 65$	$\geq 50, < 65$	$\geq 30, < 50$	$\geq 15, < 30$	$< 15$
	Program reading					

*\* When any sub score is not available because n is less than twenty, the average score excludes that sub score.*

**Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?

*This measure indicates the percent of students in each school who have attained a level of distinction on the state assessments in mathematics and reading.*

RIDE's theory of action articulates that when schools and educators are supported, all students will achieve at high levels. Current data makes clear that we are not supporting students' progress to the highest levels of achievement as indicated on NEGAP results. Currently sixteen percent (16%) and twenty-one percent (21%) of students have achievement levels in the *Proficient with Distinction* category in math and reading, respectively. By examining and rewarding schools that are elevating a large percentage of students to the highest standards, Rhode Island can learn from and recognize publicly those schools that believe good simply isn't good enough.

All other accountability measures proposed in this waiver sum proficient and proficient with distinction in calculation determinations. RIDE wants to recognize and commend schools that not only ensure students are proficient, but expect them to achieve at the highest levels. This metric is designed to incentivize high expectations for our students. We determine this metric by dividing Level 4 students (Proficient with Distinction) into the total number of students tested, for reading and mathematics individually. We will then rank the scores and assign each school a score between 1 and 5. This measure accounts for 5 percent of the accountability system across all levels (EMH). The identified cut points below were developed to reflect our current rates of proficient with distinction for both math (16%) and reading (21%). RIDE will analyze PARCC assessment data to determine whether new cut points need to be established for this metric.

**Proficient with Distinction Metric Cut Scores**

-	-	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
<b>Percent of Tested students in Distinction Level</b>	Reading	<5	≥5, <15	≥15, <30	≥30, <40	≥40
	Math	<5	≥5, <15	≥15, <25	≥25, <35	≥35

**Growth** (Elementary, Middle): Are all students making progress?

*This measure indicates whether, on average, students in each elementary and middle school are making sufficient annual growth based on their scores on state assessments in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics-and-reading. This measure examines the scores at the student level in each school and compares each student's scores over consecutive years. ~~This measure evaluates growth for three groups of students: (1) all students, (2) minority students plus students living in poverty, and (3) students with disabilities plus English Learners.~~ We are shifting this measure to measure the percent of students whose growth score fall below 35. (Note: We cannot use this measure for high schools because students take the state assessments during only one year in high school-). The PARCC assessment will determine whether growth can be calculated in both English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics at the high school level)*

Schools' absolute performance ~~in 2010-11~~ is wide-ranging. The absolute performance is important but not the only lens we will use to determine schools needing urgent attention. Growth Scores call out attention to students that are making much less academic progress than peers who have similar academic performance histories. Students who continue to have low growth scores, (below 35) are at great risk regardless of their prior achievement levels. It is expected that schools would have about 35% of their students with growth scores of lower than 35. However, we know that some schools have many fewer students than expected and others have many more than expected. If a school has significantly more than 35% of its students with a growth score lower than 35 it is an indication that there may be a problem.

**Table: 5 Distributions of Schools for Percent of Students with SGP less than 35**

<b><u>SGP Range</u></b>	<b><u>2011-12</u></b>		<b><u>2012-13</u></b>		<b><u>2013-14</u></b>	
	<b><u>Reading</u></b>	<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>Reading</u></b>	<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>Reading</u></b>	<b><u>Math</u></b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b><u>41 and Above</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>	<b><u>42</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>
<b><u>30-40</u></b>	<b><u>120</u></b>	<b><u>124</u></b>	<b><u>115</u></b>	<b><u>112</u></b>	<b><u>130</u></b>	<b><u>125</u></b>

<u>29 and Below</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>61</u>
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Table 5 confirms that most of our schools have typical percentages of students with SGP lower than 35, (between 30% and 40%). There are a substantial number of schools that are outside this norm. This spread gives us the opportunity to create cut points and quantify this metric.

Our proposed accountability system will now factor ~~in~~ a growth metric that builds on the premise that significantly high levels of students with low growth scores is concerning. It also acknowledges that some schools that demonstrate ~~strong~~significantly lower proportions of low growth even though they may not reach their absolute proficiency targets. ~~Simultaneously, we will highlight schools that are stagnant despite high performance.~~ Rhode Island will use the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) methodology developed by Damian Bettebenner.<sup>3</sup> This methodology was selected because it accounts for each student's prior academic history. As such each student's growth is compared to his or her academic peers.

~~For this measure student level percentile records in reading and in mathematics have been combined to increase the number of records available for determining median percentiles for each of the three groups (All students, Minority/Poverty and Program) that make up the components. A median percentile score is determined for each of these groups. Points from 1 to 5 are then assigned to each of these groups based on their median percentile scores and the cut point described in the table below. The mean or average of these three numbers which vary from 1 to 5 is then calculated. If the average score is 5, it will translate to all the 25 points for this measure. An average score of 1 will translate to 5 of the 25 points assigned to this measure. The equation below is used to assign Student Growth Percentile Measure points to each school. The average score is multiplied by 25 (the weight of the measure). Then, that amount is divided by 5 (the maximum number of points for the measure).~~

$$\text{Points Assigned to Student Growth Percentile Measure} = (\text{Average Score} * 25) / 5$$

~~Each student's reading and math SGPs are combined to calculate a school's total growth metric. By doing so, student subgroup populations are large enough to calculate the median SGP for each school. An SGP is calculated for all students, the Consolidated Program Subgroup, and the Consolidated Minority/Poverty Subgroup. We assign a score of one to five, based on RIDE-developed cut scores, for the 3 median scores. We calculate this component for elementary and middle schools only, and it accounts for 25 percent of the weighted accountability system. RIDE will analyze growth scores derived from NECAP and PARCC data to determine whether new cut points need to be established.~~

<sup>3</sup> Bettebenner, D. W. (2009). Norm-and criterion-referenced student growth. Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 28(4):42–51.

The tables below show the SGP quartile performance based on the 2013-14 NECAP Assessments. Again, NECAP data is used to model the projected impact of the methodology until PARCC data is available. The tables show the median SGP for each of the performance levels and for some of the subgroups. As is clearly shown, the quartile median score for each of the groups are similar. This is a clear demonstration that irrespective of a student's achievement level or subgroup, that student has an equal opportunity and capacity to demonstrate growth. We acknowledge that the data for students with disabilities and students living in poverty is slightly skewed.

**Table: 6 Relationships between Grade 5 SGP and Grade 4 Performance (Achievement Levels)**

		1-Point	2 Points	3-Points	4 Points	5-Points
-	-	All-students	<35	≥35, <45	≥45, <55	≥55, <65
	<b><u>Student Growth Percentile</u></b>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>25 %ile</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>75 %ile</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
	Minority / Poverty Subgroup GroupN					
<u>Proficient with Distinction</u>	Program Subgroup2,101	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Proficient</u>	<u>4,090</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Partially Proficient</u>	<u>1,721</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Substantially Below Proficient</u>	<u>1,651</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>

\* When any sub score is not available because n is less than twenty, the average score excludes that sub score.

**Table: 7 Relationship between 2014 SGP and Student Subgroups**

<b><u>Student Growth Percentile</u></b>						
	<u>N</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>25 %ile</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>75 %ile</u>	<u>Maximum</u>

<u>All Students</u>	<u>29,608</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Minority</u>	<u>10,990</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>IEP</u>	<u>4,789</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Poverty</u>	<u>14,544</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>47.5</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>ELL</u>	<u>2,421</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>99</u>

For this measure, the percent of students within the school with SGP scores lower than 35 is evaluated. Points will be assigned based on the distribution of this percentage. Actual cut points will be established after Spring 2015 PARCC assessment data is received. This metric will contribute 30 points towards the CIS. These points will be divided evenly between English language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. As more data become available, a three-year rolling average will be used to ensure that all schools and students are included in evaluating this metric. Again, we have resolved the persistent concern and problem that a student may be counted up to three times in evaluating this metric.

**Graduation** (high schools): Are all students ready for success?

*This measure indicates for high schools the 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rates, taking into account transfers into and out of the school.*

When NCLB was first introduced, we established a statewide baseline measure for the high-school graduation rate. The procedure for defining the baseline paralleled the procedure for defining the baseline for the academic measures. Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, RIDE adopted the NGA adjusted cohort formula based on the tracking of individual students. We established a new state baseline from which we defined a Graduation Rate Annual Target growth trajectory.

~~As of last year,~~ RIDE previously revised its accountability notebook to include a five-year graduation rate. The higher of a four-year adjusted cohort rate or a combined four- and five-year rate, weighted at 60 percent and 40 percent, respectively is used for accountability. RIDE proposes in this request to add a six-year graduation rate. This 6-year rate is important as more Rhode Island high schools retain and graduate our most vulnerable students. The introduction of a six year rate will require and adjustment to our combined weighting. We propose a composite score of 50% of a four year adjusted cohort rate and 25% of both the five year and six year graduation rates. A school's

graduation rate for the purposes of this model is the higher of the four year and composite graduation rates.

The graduation score consists of two components: one measures absolute rate, while the other considers growth toward a 100-percent graduation rate expressed as an Annual Target:

**a.i. Graduation Rate**

To calculate the graduation rate, RIDE uses the 2010-11 4-, 5-, and 6-year cohort graduation rates. The highest of the 4-year cohort graduation rate and the composite of the 4-, 5-, and 6-year cohort graduation rates (weighted .50, .25 and .25 respectively) is used to compute the graduation rate measure.

**b.ii. Graduation Rate Annual Targets**

Using the 2010-11 cohort graduation rate as a baseline, the formula, Annual Target = 100-(2010-11 graduation rate)/2 is the gap that each school must close by 2016-17. That gap is divided by 6 to arrive at each school's individual Annual Target. In order to align the graduation targets with other parts of the system, we will recalculate these targets using similar methodology to 2021. Graduation rates for June 2014, used in 2015 classifications, will be used as baseline to determine graduation rate targets from 2015 through 2021. We will assign each school a score from one to five according to the cut scores below. This component accounts for 2030 percent of the weighted accountability system, at the high-school level only.

**Table: 8 Graduation Rate Point Distribution**

	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
<b>HS Graduation Rates</b>	< 65	≥ 65 < 75	≥ 75 < 85	≥85 < 90	≥ 90

*\* To encourage schools to make extreme efforts to graduate students, schools whose graduation rates are higher than their Annual Target or schools that have a graduation rate higher than the state average may receive one additional point.*

Calculating schools total points for the graduation rates measure is a several step process. First, the composite and 4-year graduation rates are calculated. Using the higher of the two graduation rates a school is assigned points (1-5) based on the table above. Then an additional point may be added if the school met their graduation rate annual target. A school could receive up to 6 points. Finally the weighted points are calculated using the formula below. –The total points are multiplied by 2030 (the weight of the measure). Then, that amount is divided by 6 (the maximum number of points for the measure).

Points Assigned to Graduation Rate Measure = (Total points \* 20)/6.

**Improvement** (high schools): Are students improving annually?

~~This measure indicates for high schools whether the grade-11 scores on state assessments in mathematics and reading are improving each year.~~

~~High-school scale-score change:~~

~~Because our state assessment is only administered once at the high-school level (in 11<sup>th</sup> grade), a growth score is not available. As a proxy, RIDE proposes using the change in average scale scores at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to measure annual improvement. To calculate this measure, RIDE will subtract the 2011-12 mean scaled score from the 2010-11 mean scaled scores for both mathematics and reading. We will assign points (one to five) based on the cut scores in the table below. This measure will constitute five percent of the weighted accountability system, at the high-school level only. This measure is not being used in 2014-15. The PARCC assessments will establish baselines.~~

<b>HS Scaled Score Change</b>	Reading	$\leq -3$	$\geq -3 < -1$	$\geq -1 < 1$	$\geq 1 < 3$	$\geq 3$
	Math					

~~As stated elsewhere, the weight of the graduation rate and other metrics towards the CIS will be revised as data for Post-Secondary Credential become available.~~

### ASSIGNING SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNTABILITY LEVELS

Rhode Island’s proposed accountability system will place schools into one of its six levels in rank order from the highest to lowest CIS. ~~Two levels, Typical Schools and Warning Schools will be informed by additional data.~~ Each level is briefly introduced in section and connected to a comprehensive diagnostic and intervention system in subsequent sections of this application. Our methodology fairly and accurately identifies and ranks schools while adhering to all ESEA waiver requirements. Most notably, this unified federal and state accountability model places primacy on three critical questions about each of its schools.

~~1.i.~~ Is student achievement in ~~reading and mathematics~~ English Language Arts/Literacy or Mathematics unacceptably low?

~~2.ii.~~ Are there intolerable gaps in student performance?

~~3.iii.~~ Is there little or no academic progress in improving student achievement or increasing graduation rates?

Schools that answer yes to all three questions emerge as Rhode Island’s priority and focus schools. We believe that it is the combination of these factors that require the most urgent action, resources, and attention at the state and district levels.

A school's total composite score is the sum of the seven weighted metrics described in Table 2: ESEA Flexibility Design Weights. Figure 1 below presents the distribution of schools across each of Rhode Island's six levels of performance according to their Composite Index Score (CIS) as plotted by their total CIS out of one hundred possible points. [See Appendix A for a rank-ordered list of all Rhode Island schools with details on point accumulation for each component of the CIS.] Warning Schools are schools with index scores below 50 and are not identified as priority or focus. In addition, any school that fails to meet the 95% participation rate or that have individual metrics that are at low levels in one of the following -- absolute proficiency, gaps, growth, or graduation rates -- are placed into the Warning Level regardless of the CIS, subject to the cut scores set forth below:

1. An Absolute Proficiency Metric of less than or equal to 10; or
2. A Gap Score Metric of 15 or less; or
3. A Growth Score Metric of 7.5 or less; or
4. A combined Graduation and High School Scaled Score Change of 10 or less or
5. Fail to attain any AMO for two consecutive years

Rhode Island is in the midst of significant changes as it continues to align its programs, curricula, instruction, and assessment to the Common Core State Standards. Within that framework is considerable effort to align all pieces of the educational system to drive toward the goal of ensuring that every student in Rhode Island leaves our public schools college and career ready. Our accountability system is an influential program and we are working with LEAs and stakeholders to ensure that we are thoughtfully incorporating accountability processes as we move towards these new systems.

We proposed in our prior extension that accountability for the 2014-15 school year will be viewed as a baseline for schools, LEAs, and the state and consequently suspended the identification of additional Focus or Priority Schools. Priority and Focus Schools will, however, be able to exit that classification if they meet pre-determined exit criteria. The 2015-16 year will mark the first year that we are able to fully implement our accountability system under these revisions. New Priority and Focus Schools will be identified, if necessary, in that classification year.

A school's total composite score is the sum of the four weighted metrics. As noted previously, the "Post-Secondary Credential" metric will be added when data are available. We are also prepared to introduce the Growth Metric into high schools if the assessment is able to produce a growth score. Priority Schools will be classified by identifying the lowest 5% of Title I schools using the CIS. The Focus Schools will be classified by identifying the next lowest 10% of schools using the CIS. Our next classification level is Schools in Good Standing. These schools may or may not have alerts. Alerts are assigned when one or more of the following conditions are true.

- Schools that have participation rates below 95%;
- Schools that do not meet an AMO for three consecutive years; or
- Schools with graduation rates below 70%;

RIDE is especially concerned about participation rates for reasons of both accuracy and equity. Outside of the ~~composite index score~~ Composite Index Score based on the components listed herein, each school will be responsible for testing at least 95% of its eligible students at each grade level. Failure to hit this target in a single year will result in a ~~“Warning” classification, regardless of scores in the component measures.~~ RIDE is considerably more concerned with schools that have continuing difficulty to meet the Participation target. For that reason, schools that fail to meet the Participation target for two consecutive years will be automatically assigned a “Focus” classification. Schools that fail Participation for three consecutive years will be assigned a “Priority” classification, again, regardless of other school-level performance measures. A one-year anomaly in this area may be understandable; multiple years of missing Participation rate targets will be considered unacceptable an alert classification, regardless of scores in the component measures. Schools not meeting their 95% participation rates cannot be classified as Commended or Leading, nor are they able to exit out of Focus or Priority status until they meet this requirement.

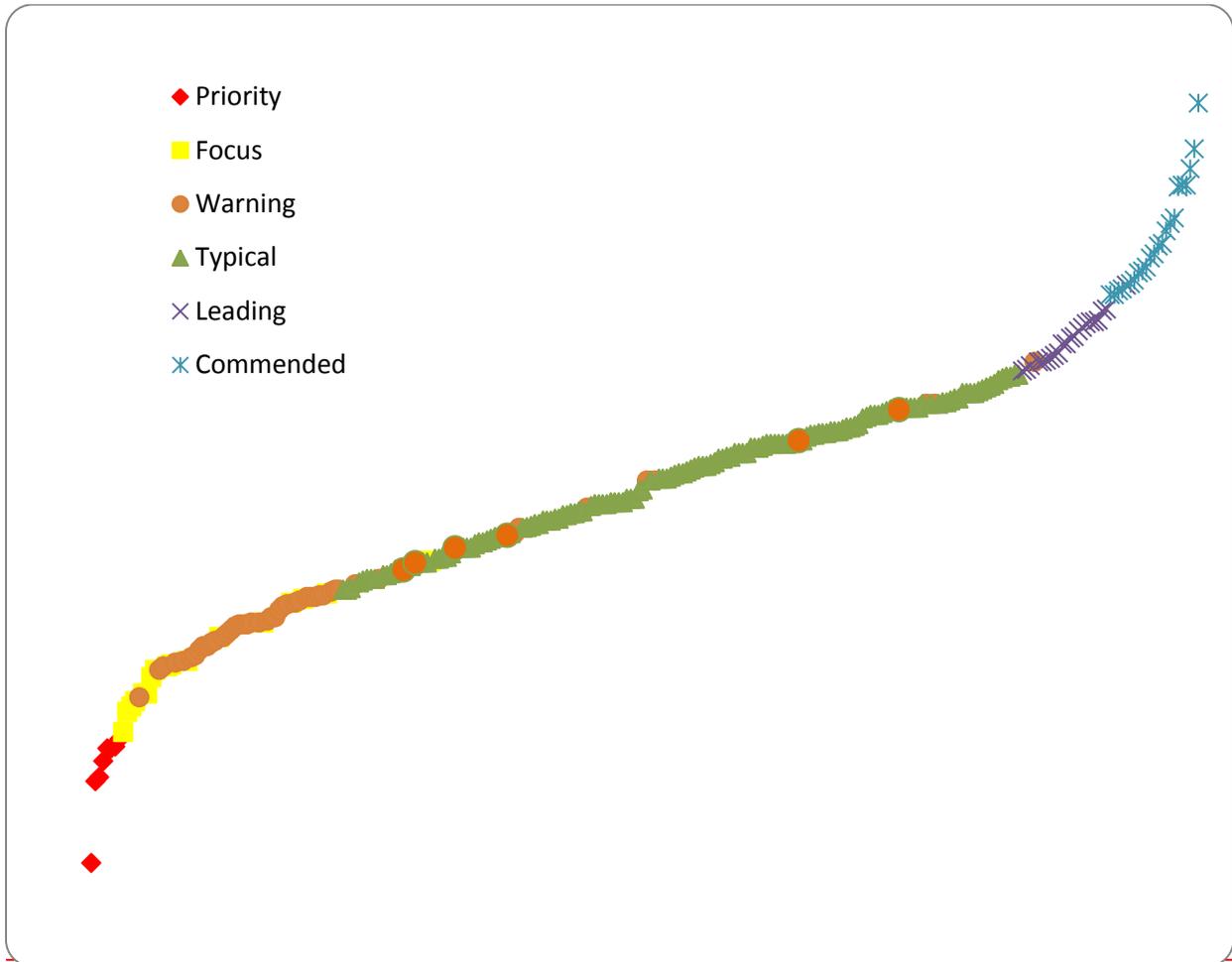
~~RIDE will identify and classify 45 schools as Warning Schools in the current year.~~

~~During the 2012, 2013, and 2014 academic years, RIDE identified a full set of warning schools based upon the above-described criteria. During the period covered under this waiver extension—the 2014-2015 school year, RIDE will suspend the practice of labeling warning schools. This suspension of warning labeling is the result of extensive consultation with practitioners and stakeholders. During this consultation, both formal and informal, there was agreement that it was both appropriate and reasonable to dedicate the 2014-2015 school year to a rigorous and transparent review of the emerging PARCC data, to develop a collective understanding of the results, and to use those results to resume labeling beyond the 2014-2015 school year.~~

The combined powers of the utilization of the CIS plus the additional criteria enable RIDE to accurately identify schools that have either *widespread* low levels of performance and growth and large achievement gaps or *isolated but serious* problems in the areas of overall achievement, low growth, or low graduation rates. The ~~resultant~~ expected distribution highlights projects that RIDE will continue to have the ability ~~of RIDE’s proposed system~~ to differentiate among the breadth of performance across all Rhode Island schools. ~~The range is from 25 to 94.5. Further, the levels are designed to create ambitious yet attainable targets for schools.~~

~~Figure 1 provides compelling visual support for the accuracy and sensitivity of Rhode Island’s proposed system of measuring school performance. It is virtually impossible for a school that is underserving its students to escape notice. We are extremely confident that this comprehensive approach to measuring school performance will provide an accurate picture of student achievement from a number of different perspectives. Of course, knowing that a school is struggling, and where, is still a far cry from knowing exactly what needs to be addressed to remedy the situation.~~

**Figure 1: Rhode Island School Classification by CIS**



### **Individualizing Supports and Interventions**

The Rhode Island system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support creates incentives and support to close achievement gaps for all subgroups. An effective accountability system requires information from multiple sources to inform analysis of the many aspects of education systems. Internal accountability for continuous improvement requires an understanding of the complex and overlapping operations at work in schools and school systems. The Basic Education Program is explicit about LEA responsibilities in this regard: "Each LEA shall develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate an accountability system, using information from multiple sources, to inform analysis of the many aspects of the education system. Relevant data shall consist of a combination of contextual and demographic information, measures of student learning, curriculum and instruction strategies and practices, and perceptual or evaluative data."

~~It is counterintuitive that we expect students to have an individualized learning plan, individualized educational program, personal and academic portfolios, transition plans, and personal literacy plans while we have not sufficiently helped schools and LEAs develop individualized plans based on *their* specific needs. Our recent experiences with Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools (PLAs) have taught us that concentrated effort on diagnosis, though time-consuming, can have meaningful and lasting results. Even were diagnoses to be perfect, there needs to be a systematic way to monitor frequently and gauge when supports and interventions fail to meet anticipated objectives. NCLB provided little funding for this monitoring, but our Office of Transformation, recognizing this gap in capacity, has re-tooled its staffing to ensure that monitoring and evaluation are ongoing functions of RIDE.~~

~~RIDE proposes to build off of these lessons learned to put in place a transparent, predictable, and sustainable system of differentiated accountability, support and interventions, supports and rewards. The accountability system will:~~

- ~~1. Include the processes and written plans for a comprehensive assessment system and for systemic problem solving;~~
- ~~2. Specify policies, procedures, and strategies for public reporting that comply with state and federal reporting requirements and that ensure broadly accessible and timely dissemination of information;~~
- ~~3. Establish procedures by which an LEA can conduct a thorough self-study of the LEA functions and capacities for continuous improvement, using criteria that the Commissioner of Education establishes; and,~~
- ~~4. Include development of a plan that demonstrates how the LEA will use self-study findings to inform allocation of resources, strategic planning, and differentiated supports to schools.~~

~~The revised Basic Education Program (BEP) consists of a set of measurable expectations for the seven functions described above. Meta-analysis of national critiques of school and LEA improvement efforts revealed that four *capacities* must be present in order to achieve success in any of the functions. Unfortunately, there is significantly more research that documents failed improvement efforts than successful ones. In a review of more than two-dozen studies, RIDE analysts were able to pinpoint the failure in any instance as resulting from insufficient capacity in one of four critical areas, which we labeled the “four capacities”:~~

- ~~1. Leadership;~~
- ~~2. Content/Program;~~
- ~~3. Personnel Supports; and~~
- ~~4. Infrastructure.~~

~~In order to achieve results, each LEA “Function” (see matrix below) must be supported in all four capacity areas. We can then map and apply consistently across the state the performance measures for each capacity in each functional area. The summary below provides additional information about the 28 performance areas.~~

## LEA Functions



For the first time, Rhode Island has a system of measures that we can use to pinpoint gaps in performance by the adults in the education system, as well as gaps in the support structures designed to improve student performance. Tracking student performance can give us an accurate picture of how well a school or LEA is performing. It takes other sources of data to inform where and why the education system is not improving.

Each of the 28 “boxes” in the performance matrix represents a function and capacity that schools and LEAs must fulfill if they are to prepare all students for college, challenging careers, and life. Because each box in the matrix is measurable, each school and LEA can determine where they are struggling or excelling in a certain capacity or function. We developed our Surveyworks data, including student, parent, teacher, and administrator perception data, to be in alignment with the seven functions. We have mapped our Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) to the functions as well. In short, RIDE is committed to opening the black box, and, in doing so, to differentiating the underlying reasons for school and LEA performance in unprecedented ways.

The performance matrix will be invaluable for schools because, for the first time, systems will be able to examine all of their data in relation to one another. Currently, one can make judgments regarding suspension rates and percentage of students who report they have been bullied. But one cannot necessarily place a value judgment on dollars tied to in-school suspension initiatives and bullying programs. With this matrix, schools can analyze results in conjunction with the resources attached to those outcomes. In this way, RIDE can systematically: a) help schools target limited funding in meaningful ways; b) compare their results with peer schools to determine whether they could reallocate resources based on best practice; and, c) study return-on-investment

~~for programs at individual schools and initiatives statewide. Finally, the BEP is the tool that LEAs can leverage when negotiating their budgets with school boards and town councils. It is clear to many districts already that the BEP performance measures are a way to protect school programs from massive budget cuts in a time when cities and towns are slashing budgets daily.~~

~~The performance matrix will give each school a score for each of the 28 boxes (which can then be aggregated up to an LEA matrix). For priority schools, RIDE will work with the schools and LEAs to examine the matrix and determine their greatest weaknesses. From a menu of moderate to invasive capacity interventions, the LEA will select those interventions that correspond to the weaknesses, as the matrix has determined. Although the LEA selects the option, RIDE must approve the interventions to ensure that the interventions that the LEA selects correspond with needs as reflected in the data. Ultimately, the measures inside each of the boxes are the outcomes the school seeks to improve in the short term in order to improve achievement outcomes for all students in the long term. It is imperative that the data in the matrix includes short-, medium-, and long-term evidence points so that schools can determine early and often whether they are moving in the right direction. Focus schools will follow the same process. The range of interventions available to focus schools would be expanded, as their needs may suggest less invasive interventions and supports.~~

## **English Learners and Students with Disabilities**

**The Rhode Island system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support includes interventions to improve the performance of English Learners and students with disabilities.**

All students with disabilities participate fully in the statewide assessments (sometimes with testing accommodations) or they are tested using the Alternate Assessment system if they meet the eligibility criteria. Less than 1 percent of all students are eligible to participate in the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment system. Thus, all students with disabilities are included in the state accountability system.

With a statewide student identifier system in place (2005), we can assign test results of students who have recently exited special education to this subgroup for purposes of disaggregation in determining AMO for that group. Students who receive section 504 services are not included in determining the students-with-disabilities

~~disaggregations-disaggregation. The assignment of exited students to the special-needs disaggregated group is for two years. This concept is similar to the way English-Learner-exited students are handled in disaggregations-disaggregation. The introduction of the statewide student-identifier system ensures greater accuracy in our ability to account for all students. Beginning in 2010 RIDE also began collecting Teacher-Student-Course (TCS) data so that assessment results and growth measures could be analyzed by down to the classroom levels.~~

Rhode Island mandates the assessment of all students including students who have limited English-language abilities. Rhode Island has adopted the definition of a Limited English Proficient student in Title IX of NCLB, Part A Definitions, Section 9101. Students who are learning English are assessed with the [NEGAPPARCC](#) exams, with accommodations as needed, just like those who do not receive Limited English Proficient (LEP) services (except that students who have been in the United States for less than one year are not assessed in reading). In addition, English [Learners](#) are assessed in English-language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) at all grade levels - K through 12. Rhode Island developed English-language proficiency standards in partnership with WIDA. To maximize the alignment with WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards, Rhode Island adopted a new English-language proficiency assessment (ACCESS) in Spring 2006. Rhode Island has Title III AMAO targets for students on this exam. Students who receive LEP services, like all other students, take the [NEGAPPARCC](#) assessments for accountability purposes. In addition to this, English [Learners](#) take the ACCESS English-language proficiency test.

### Implementation Plan

**Rhode Island has provided a plan that ensures the system will be implemented no later than the next school year ~~(2012-13)~~.**

The BEP, in concert with our Strategic Plan and our Race to the Top Scope of Work (SOW), neatly aligns our goals and expectations with the accountability principles outlined by CCSSO. Common Core standards together with the consortium PARCC assessments will ensure that performance goals are aligned with college and career readiness. Our redesigned accountability system will provide better data for RIDE to provide differentiated recognition and support. Multiple [measures](#) of student outcomes, including absolute performance, in addition to growth and gap reduction [across all subgroups](#), will help our schools and LEAs target instructional improvements. Our revised comparison group ensures that we will have a clearer roadmap to support our students with the greatest challenges.

Improvements to our data systems, enhanced by Race to the Top and the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, will allow us to provide real-time data to our teachers and administrators and user-friendly information to parents, students, and policy-makers. We will make these same data available to researchers and others so that they can diagnose and evaluate programs and services. Our proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support structures will strengthen the capacity of schools and LEAs by targeting interventions, external support, training, extended learning opportunities, and professional development based on accurate, valid, and reliable data. These differentiated structures will help us keep our focus on our lowest-performing schools and on closing achievement gaps. Finally, these efforts combined will elevate our reform work to a new level by encouraging and supporting innovation, meaningful evaluation, and continuous improvement for all Rhode Island schools.

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

**Option A**

The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.

**Option B**

If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:

- a. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and
- b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

**2.B Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives**

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.



<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p> <p>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</p> <p>iii. Provide a link to the State’s report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)</p>
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**2.C Reward Schools**

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

RIDE will identify Reward (or “Commended”) Schools as a subset of higher performing schools classified as “Leading Schools.” Leading ~~schools~~Schools will be schools with a Composite Index Score (CIS) between 70 and 100 unless they have the additional designation as a Commended School. Our Leading Schools cut across all grade levels and regions of the state.

Commended Schools in the Rhode Island System ~~are the state’s Title I schools that are beating the odds as identified under the proposed accountability system. The system is designed to be particularly sensitive at the highest and lowest ends of performance. Commended Schools include the top 5% of the Title I schools that are grouped within other non-Title I schools will be highlighted as Commended Schools. They have the highest total CIS in the state and, do not have any significant subgroup gaps-, and have met the 95-percent targets for participation rates. Commended Schools include the top 5 percent of the Title I schools in the state.~~ Their CIS ranges from ~~7977.5~~ to ~~9491.5~~ points based on the ~~2011-12~~2013-14 achievement data-; once we receive 2015 PARCC assessment results, RIDE will re-examine the CIS scores schools need to attain to earn Commended status.

The Commended Schools demonstrate a range of strong performance metrics by either demonstrating the highest overall performance without having significant achievement gaps OR by having the strongest performance or graduation gains without having any significant achievement gaps. -In addition, any Commended School that is a high school must have among the highest graduation rates in the state.

Commended Schools will be identified because of their combination of strong metrics in three critical areas: overall achievement, closing gaps, or strong growth.- By utilizing rank-ordered CIS ratings to identify Commended schools, Rhode Island is able to identify these schools while paying particular attention to the three aforementioned metrics. ~~Eleven~~Ten (10) of the ~~twenty-two~~30 2014 Commended ~~schools~~Schools received the maximum 30 points in closing subgroup gaps, indicating that they have either closed the achievement gap or have amongst the smallest achievement gaps in Rhode Island. ~~Five~~

Six (6) of the ~~22~~30 2014 Commended Schools received 27 points or more in the absolute proficiency, making them amongst the highest achieving in Rhode Island. ~~Twelve~~Sixteen (16) of the ~~twenty-two commended~~30 2014 Commended schools have demonstrated growth at the elementary or middle level or graduation rates that earned points of 20 or higher. -Taken as a group, Commended Schools serve as proof points that schools of all levels, sizes, and demographics can achieve at the highest levels while at the same time closing the achievement gap. Leading and Commended Schools account for approximately ~~46%~~11 percent of our schools statewide.

~~During the 2012, 2013, and 2014 academic years, RIDE identified a full set of Commended and Leading schools based upon the above-described criteria. During the period covered under this waiver extension—the 2014-2015 school year, RIDE will suspend the practice of labeling leading schools. This suspension of the leading label is~~

~~the result of extensive consultation with practitioners and stakeholders. During this consultation, both formal and informal, there was agreement that it was both appropriate and reasonable to dedicate the 14-15 school year to a rigorous and transparent review of the emerging PARCC data, to develop a collective understanding of the results, and to use those results to resume classification beyond the 14-15 school year. RIDE will continue to identify commended schools through the 14-15 school year in the manner described above.~~

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

The 2014 Rhode Island Commended Schools are:

Anna M. McCabe School (Smithfield)  
Archie R. Cole Middle School (East Greenwich)  
Barrington High School  
BEACON Charter High School the Arts  
Blackstone Academy Charter School  
Chariho High School  
Charlestown Elementary School (Chariho)  
Classical High School (Providence)  
East Greenwich High School  
Exeter-West Greenwich Senior High School  
Fort Barton School (Tiverton)  
Francis J. Varieur Elementary School (Pawtucket)  
Glen Hills School (Cranston)  
Hope Elementary School (Scituate)  
Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts (Pawtucket)  
The Learning Community charter public school  
Matunuck Elementary School (South Kingstown)  
Middletown High School  
Mt. Hope High School (Bristol Warren)  
Narragansett High School  
North Providence High School  
North Smithfield High School  
Ponaganset High School (Foster-Glocester)  
Portsmouth High School  
Rockwell School (Bristol Warren)  
Scituate High School  
Smithfield Senior High School  
Stone Hill School (Cranston)  
Westerly High School  
Wickford Middle School

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

~~RIDE will publicly recognize both the highest performing and the high-progress schools in Rhode Island by awarding a certificate, notifying the public and the media, and holding an awards ceremony at the Rhode Island State House, all in keeping with current and recent practice in Rhode Island.~~

~~Since 2001 — before the passage of NCLB — RIDE has been recognizing schools for both exceptionally high achievement and exceptional improvement. Recognized schools are distinguished as “Commended Schools,” a classification that comes with public recognition by RIDE, the media, Rhode Island Board of Education, the Governor’s Office, and members of the General Assembly.~~

~~Under the terms of this waiver application, in response to the findings from our ESEA Flexibility monitoring, and in keeping with over a decade of practice, Reward Schools will be publicly classified as “Commended Schools” and will receive a certificate signed by the Chair of the Board of Education and by the Commissioner of Education. In the spring of each year, RIDE, in consultation with the R.I. School Superintendents Association (RISSA) and the R.I. Association of School Principals (RIASP), will participate in a public ceremony at the Rhode Island State House to honor the Commended Schools. This annual State House event, which routinely involves the Governor and key elected officials, will utilize the classification and accountability system to recognize these High Performing and High Progress Schools~~

~~By maintaining a strong emphasis on trend-based evidence of progress, gap closure, and high performance, these areas of commendation are in keeping with the both overall guidelines set forth in ESEA section 1117(b)(1)(B) and the overall design of Rhode Island’s accountability and classification system.~~

~~We are confident that the selection and promotion of Commended Schools has and will continue to have the overall beneficial effect of advancing student achievement across the state, not merely in Commended Schools. All schools aspire to this commendation. Through recognizing both progress and high performance, this distinction is within reach of all schools, regardless of their current achievement level. Schools receiving this award have used the opportunity to invite their entire school community to the awards ceremony and they have followed up with local ceremonies and recognitions and with display of the commendation certificate in prominent locations in their schools — all of which can build a sense of community accomplishment, pride, and continuous pursuit of excellence.~~

~~On December 11, 2014, Governor Lincoln D. Chafee, the R.I. Board of Education, and RIDE held a ceremony in the State Room of the Rhode Island State House to recognize and honor the Rhode Island 2014 Commended Schools. All media were invited to this event, as well as representatives from all Commended Schools and the legislators from~~

the communities whose schools were to receive recognition. Each Commended School received a signed, framed certificate of commendation for display. Speakers at the program included Governor Chafee, Board Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso, the Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, the Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and Commissioner Gist. Rhode Island will continue to publicly recognize Commended Schools through an annual ceremony of this nature.

**—Table 5: Planning for Recognition of Reward 2.D Priority Schools**

Milestone or Activity	Date	Party Responsible	Evidence	Resources	Obstacles
ID of SY 13-14 reward schools	6/14	RIDE	N/A	Staff time	None
Award ceremony	9/14	RIDE, Board of Education, Governor, General Assembly leadership	N/A	Staff time	None
Identification SY 14-15 reward schools	12/15	RIDE	N/A	Staff time	None
Award ceremony	2/16	RIDE, Board of Education, Governor, General Assembly leadership	N/A	Staff time	None

RIDE will notify all media regarding the list of Commended Schools and will post the list of Commended Schools on the RIDE website. In addition, Commissioner Gist will invite leaders from all Commended Schools to join her in the State House for her annual address to the Rhode Island General Assembly, where they will be called out for recognition.

**Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

**2.D—Priority Schools**

2.D.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also

demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

~~Rhode Island currently has a strong system for identifying and intervening in our lowest performing schools and districts. The waiver will enable us to integrate our state system with federal accountability requirements and, in turn, expand the supports available to those proposed system. We will continue to include these indicators and add additional, more sensitive indicators to identify schools that are struggling to improve student outcomes.~~

The system that Rhode Island developed for our initial ESEA Flexibility waiver application allowed the state to utilize more sensitive indicators than ever before to identify schools that are struggling to improve student outcomes. We will continue to use the Composite Index Score (CIS) as the primary means of identifying the state's lowest-performing schools. Please see section 2A for detailed information about the measures and cut scores associated with the CIS under our prior waiver extension. These cut scores will be reviewed, and either confirmed or revised using PARCC data when available. The revisions to our methodology for calculating the CIS will allow us to more precisely determine which schools are closing achievement gaps and ensuring all students are ready for post-secondary success. In addition, these revisions will result in more precise performance diagnosis, allowing us to provide more targeted support and to work with LEAs to set benchmarks for improvement that are accurate predictors of progress toward exit from priority status.

At this time, Rhode Island has twelve schools that are identified as our Tier I persistently lowest achieving schools and thirteen schools that are considered to be "served" under the final requirements of School Improvement 1003(g). -These schools were identified in a methodology that considered many of the metrics we ~~intend to include~~included in our Priority Schools identification. All PLA Tier I and II schools that are currently being "served" under 1003(g) ~~will be~~were classified as ~~"priority"~~Priority schools ~~for the purposes of classification~~ under ~~this~~our approved 2012 ESEA Flexibility waiver.

~~The~~In 2012, we identified four additional Priority Schools ~~will account for 5% of all Title I schools in Rhode Island plus one additional non-Title I school, resulting in the identification of five schools that have not been previously required to implement comprehensive reform. The Priority Schools are, which were~~ those with the lowest Composite Index Score, (CIS). ~~The Commissioner will have discretion to classify a school as a Priority School based on a number of factors, including resource availability and other information collected beyond the CIS. Please see section 2A for detailed information about the measures and cut scores associated with the CIS.~~

~~In our proposed system, five)~~ that year. In 2013, three additional schools ~~will be identified~~were classified as Priority Schools. In all cases, these schools were initially classified in 2012 as PriorityFocus Schools, for a total of eighteen, including our previously served persistently lowest achieving schools. These schools and fell to Priority status the subsequent year. In 2014, we identified one additional Priority School

based on the schools CIS. We also classified three of our Priority Schools as Priority-Rising, indicating that their improvement trajectories are on track to exit in the coming years.

In total, these twenty-one Priority Schools exceed the number equal to 5% of our Title I schools and are our lowest performing schools as reflected by both the multiple measures that inform the CIS, as well as the lowest performing schools as measured by absolute proficiency in reading and mathematics. ~~These eighteen~~ At the time of identification, these schools:

- ~~Demonstrate~~ Demonstrated extraordinarily low absolute proficiency rates in reading, (31%- 47% proficient) and mathematics (2%-31% proficient);
- ~~Demonstrate~~ Demonstrated the largest gaps in student achievement in reading and mathematics, ranging from 37 to 75 percentage point gaps;
- ~~Show~~ Showed low rates of academic growth compared to schools with students of similar academic histories or low graduation rates; and,
- Missed most of their Annual Measurable Objectives by large margins.
- ~~Missed most of their Annual Measurable Objectives by large margins.~~

Their

All these circumstances contributed to their composite index scores rangeranging from 25 to 36.33.

~~Since approval of this waiver, Today, among all Priority Schools, we see composite index scores ranging from 29.5-61.3 additional schools have been classified as Priority schools. In all cases, these schools were in the 2011-12 school year as Focus Schools and fell to Priority status the subsequent year. These schools were already in the process of quarterly reporting and monitoring for Focus Schools, which was expanded to meet commitments of Priority schools.~~

All schools currently classified as Priority will remain Priority under this waiver renewal unless they have met exit criteria. Priority schools meeting the exit criteria will be re-classified according to their CIS score. Priority Schools that have shown significant progress and are eligible to meet exit criteria based on the following year's test results will receive the additional indicator of Rising. See page 102 for detailed information on exit criteria.

As approved in our ESEA waiver extension request, RIDE will not classify new Priority Schools on the basis of the 2014-15 administration of PARCC. When results of the 2015-16 state testing year are available and the Composite Index Score is calculated based on the methodology described in section 2A, RIDE will identify any additional Priority Schools as those with the lowest CIS statewide. The Commissioner will have discretion to classify a school as Priority based on a number of factors, including

resource availability and other information collected beyond the CIS. Priority Schools will account for no fewer than 5% of all Title I schools in Rhode Island.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA’s list of priority schools in Table 2.

~~The most up-to-date list of priority schools has previously been provided to USED during Rhode Island’s recent ESEA Part B monitoring.~~

An updated list is provided below reflecting the addition of one Priority School newly-identified in 2014. RIDE will provide a further revised list to USED in January 2016 that reflects any updates resulting from schools exiting as a result of the outcomes of the 2014-15 administration of PARCC.

<u>Priority Schools</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Title 1</u>	<u>Cohort</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Cornel Young &amp; Charlotte Woods</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Central Falls High School</u>	<u>Central Falls</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>Rising</u>
<u>W. B. Cooley &amp; Acad International</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Lillian Feinstein Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Roger Williams Middle</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Charles E. Shea High</u>	<u>Pawtucket</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>William E. Tolman High</u>	<u>Pawtucket</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>Rising</u>
<u>Carl G. Lauro Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Restart</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Dr. Jorge Alvarez High</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Restart</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Gilbert Stuart Middle</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Restart</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Mount Pleasant High</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Pleasant View Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>Rising</u>
<u>RI School for the Deaf</u>	<u>Rhode Island</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Transformation</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Agnes B. Hennessey Elementary</u>	<u>East Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Dr. M. H. Sullivan Elementary</u>	<u>Newport</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Gov. Christopher DelSesto Middle</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Mary E. Fogarty Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Robert L. Bailey IV Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>

<u>Central High</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle</u>	<u>Central Falls</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Hope High</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Orlo Avenue Elementary</u>	<u>East Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

### Overall Design Goals of the Intervention System

RIDE has developed an intervention plan for all LEAs with ~~priority schools~~Priority Schools that is aligned to the seven federal turnaround principles, ~~derived from a meta-analysis of recent research on school and district turnaround~~, includes specific and concrete strategies to support the needs of English Learners and students with disabilities, ~~and~~. This approach is reflective of Rhode Island’s experiences in large-scale reform over the past ten years.

To that end, the intervention system is ~~designed to be:~~

- ~~Diagnostic, requiring~~built on a set of design principles. First, the system is diagnostic. It requires that –

- a. ~~LEAs review and employ a rich set of qualitative and quantitative data to select and implement interventions that are responsive to the strengths and weaknesses of each identified school; and,~~

- b. ~~The SEA issues commissioner approval of selected intervention models~~approach and strategies based upon their demonstrable connection to the strengths and weaknesses of each identified school.

- ~~Targeted, providing~~

- a. ~~Second, the system is targeted. It provides~~ LEAs and schools with ~~targeted, focused, and surgical~~ intervention options and strategies that address the unique needs of identified schools and the student populations within each school, ~~and~~. The SEA works with LEAs to ensure that the intervention approach and strategies are feasible, ambitious, scalable, and appropriate for that particular school and district.

- b. ~~The SEA the opportunity to work with LEAs to ensure that the intervention model and strategies are feasible, ambitious, scalable, appropriate.~~

- ~~Empirically~~Third, it is empirically based, providing

a. LEAs ~~the ability to~~ select from a managed list of bold and empirically-proven interventions derived from a ~~metanalysis~~meta-analysis of school turnaround research over the last five years; ~~and,~~

~~b. The SEA with the ability to align resources and systems and coordinate state-level services to improve the effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency of the RIDE support.~~

• ~~A~~The system will be a catalyst for bold reform, ensuring that –

~~a. All~~all identified schools construct a plan for rapid and bold reform that addresses systemic weaknesses, including comprehensive changes to systems of curriculum, instruction and assessment; governance; and in many cases, flexibility within the collective bargaining agreement; ~~and~~

~~b. The SEA. Finally, the~~ intervention system ~~establishes~~will be outcomes-driven. In the early phases of intervention, it will establish clear and ~~bold~~demanding expectations for reform plans, and parameters ~~and on~~ the conditions and criteria ~~for~~that lead to success.

• ~~Outcomes-driven, requiring that~~ – ~~Regular~~ This will be followed by regular and intensive progress – monitoring by both the SEA and LEA through a carefully chosen and mutually ~~understood~~s set of leading and student outcomes measures

RIDE’s proposed intervention system further reflects the policy priorities that underpin the design of the accountability system, with a relentless focus on: identifying and intervening in schools that demonstrate large achievement gaps between the performance of the school’s most academically struggling students and its overall population, low levels of absolute achievement, low graduation rates, or high percentages of students with growth scores lower than 35 such that a large percentage of students are at risk of losing ground.

~~(1) Identification and intervention in schools demonstrating low or no progress toward improved student outcomes;~~

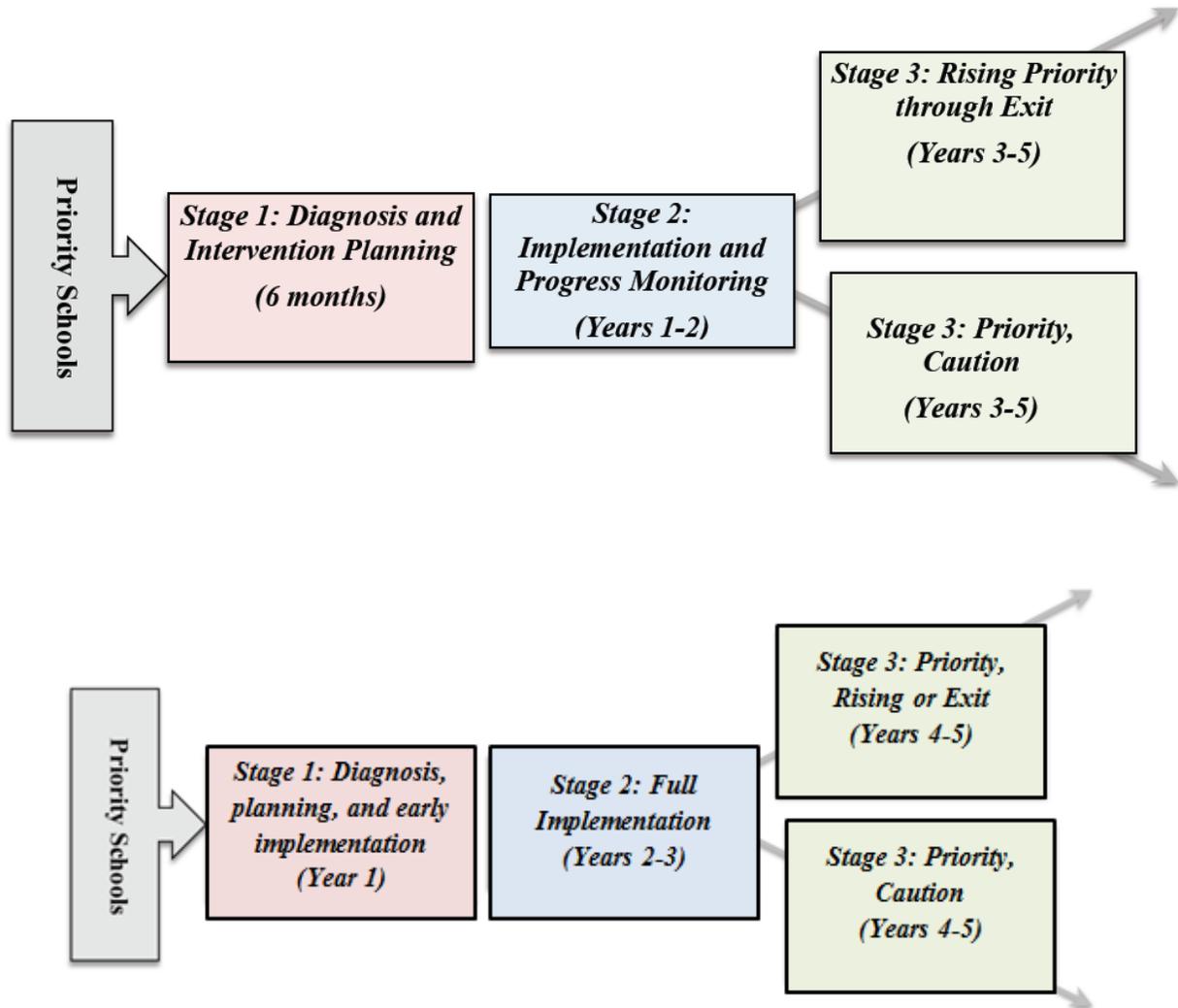
~~(2) Identification and intervention in schools with large and growing or stagnant achievement gaps between the performance reference group and student subpopulations; and~~

~~(3) Low levels of absolute achievement for all students and student subpopulations.~~

### Priority Schools: A Three-Stage Intervention System

Priority ~~school~~School reform efforts will be organized into three distinct stages, enabling both the LEA and SEA to effectively target resources and monitor progress in a manner appropriate to the stage. An overview of these stages can be seen in Figure 21; the requirements and goals of each stage are described in the remainder of this section.

**Figure 1: Three Stages of Intervention System for Priority Schools**



**Stage One: Diagnosis and, Intervention Planning (6, and Early Implementation (10 months from identification – School Year 1)**

Stage One provides LEAs and identified schools six months to make critical decisions about their intervention approach, develop a comprehensive plan, and establish performance targets that will be used throughout their period of identification. During this phase, there are several key tasks: LEAs and schools then undertake early implementation actions for the remainder of the school year. During this phase, there are several key tasks. RIDE will administer the diagnostic screen and conduct an SEA/LEA data meeting to discuss results. The LEA will select an intervention approach

for RIDE approval. The LEA will develop a school reform and resourcing plan that includes establishing performance targets. RIDE will review and approve the school reform and resourcing plan. Finally, the LEA and school will conduct early implementation of the plan.

- ~~(1) RIDE administration of the diagnostic screen and a SEA/LEA data meeting during which the results are discussed;~~
- ~~(2) LEA selection of an intervention model;~~
- ~~(3) RIDE approval of the intervention model;~~
- ~~(4) LEA development of a school reform and resourcing plan, including establishing performance targets; and~~
- ~~(5) SEA approval of the school reform and resourcing plan.~~

Table 6 summarizes the key function of ~~each of the five~~ tasks associated with *Stage One: Diagnosis and Intervention Planning* and further detail is presented below.

Task	Intended Function	SEA	LEA	School
<b>Task 1: Diagnostic Screen &amp; Data Meeting</b>	Analyze and review performance, culture, climate and student outcome data (including full disaggregation of student outcome data at subpopulation levels)	☑	☑	☑
	Document the strengths/weaknesses of priority school(s) and LEA(s) serving them	☑	☑	☑
	Establish clear expectations for LEA decision-making and required connection to school performance data	☑		
<b>Task 2: Selection of intervention <del>model</del>Approach</b>	LEA selection of intervention <del>model</del> approach and associated intervention strategies		☑	☑
	LEA submission of intervention <del>model</del> approach selection, along with relevant data and rationale, to Commissioner for approval		☑	
<b>Task 3: Intervention <del>model</del>Approach approval</b>	Commissioner review and approval of LEA <del>model</del> approach, including a review to ensure that all plans meet the seven federal turnaround principles	☑		
	Hold LEAs accountable for demonstrating the connection between results of diagnostic screen and intervention <del>model</del> approach selection	☑		
<b>Task 4: Development of LEA school reform and resourcing plan</b>	LEA development of school reform plan		☑	☑
	Develop strategies for resourcing reform plan, including the use of SES and PD reserves, transferability, and other flexibility associated with waiver	☑	☑	☑

	Establish (at the LEA <u>and school</u> level) performance targets including leading and outcome measures for each major intervention strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Task 5: School reform and resourcing plan approval</b>	<del>Commissioner review and RIDE approval of LEA school reform plan including leading and outcome measures for each major intervention strategy</del>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	<del>Commissioner review and approval of LEA performance targets</del> Hold LEAs accountable for demonstrating connection between results of diagnostic screen, intervention approach, and the details of the school reform plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	<del>Hold LEAs accountable for demonstrating connection between results of diagnostic screen, intervention model, and the details of the school reform plan</del> RIDE approval of resourcing plan, including LEA utilization of reinvestment of SES and PD reserves, transferability, and other flexibility associated with waiver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Task 6: Early Implementation</b>	RIDE approval of resourcing plan, including LEA utilization of reinvestment of SES and PD reserves, transferability, and other flexibility associated with waiver LEA and school implement limited aspects of the school reform plan and prepare for substantial changes in the following school year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**The Diagnostic Screen and Data Meeting**

~~After waiver approval, RIDE will develop~~ developed and ~~administer~~ administered a comprehensive diagnostic screen for each ~~priority school.~~ Priority School. This diagnostic screen ~~demonstrates~~ demonstrated RIDE’s commitment, ~~through this waiver application,~~ to a comprehensive and granular disaggregation and vigorous interrogation of school level data with a focus on identifying root causes of underperformance. ~~In addition~~ This diagnostic tool is improved through this proposal through an expansion to ~~many~~ include other indicators, ~~this diagnostic screen is the home of~~ while continuing to focus on a highly detailed review of disaggregated sub-population performance. Measures do or will include:

~~This screen will include a wide array of information including, but not limited to:~~

- (1) Detailed, disaggregated data on the student performance metrics that comprise the school’s Composite Index Score and resulted in identification, including:
  - a. Number at each PARCC performance level in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy at each grade level and their membership in subpopulations;

- b. Characteristics of the group of students with SGPs <35 in each subject area, including grade level and membership in subgroups;
- c. Characteristics of the group of students in the lowest quartile of performance in the school, including grade level and membership in subgroups;
- d. Characteristics of the group of students graduating; and,
- e. When available, characteristics of those students contributing to the school's Post-Secondary Credential score, including membership in subgroups and pathway to credential attainment.

~~(1)~~(2) School climate, including suspension and referral data;

~~(2)~~(3) Student attendance, ~~truancy,~~ and chronic absenteeism data;

~~(3) Students in grades 6-12 identified through the early warning system;~~

~~(4) Parent, student, and faculty survey data;~~

~~(5)~~(4) English Learner data including:

- a. Student achievement and growth rates on the ACCESS test for ELs, Rhode Island's English language proficiency assessment;
- ~~b. Exit rates for English Learners~~
- ~~c. Achievement rates of exited and monitored English Learners;~~
- ~~d.b.~~ Disproportionate identification of English Learners as students with disabilities; and,
- ~~e. District alignment to WIDA standards and utilization of empirically proven instructional programs to provide English Learners with content-rich, linguistically appropriate learning environments.~~

~~(6) Teacher evaluation, attendance, and performance data;~~

c. Data collected through on-site monitoring reports for schools and districts.

~~(7)~~(5) Achievement and outcome data for students with disabilities, including:

~~a. Least restrictive environment data,~~

~~b.a.~~ Student transition patterns;

~~c.b.~~ Progress of students with IEPs;

Consolidated summary

c. Disproportionate identification of all federal indicators students for IDEA/IEPs;

d. Disproportionate suspension of students with IEPs; and,

e. Data collected through on-site monitoring reports for schools and districts;

- ~~(8) LEA expenditure analysis including comparisons of the identified schools' FY11 investments in:~~
- ~~a.—Administrative overhead expenses against statewide average;~~
  - ~~b.—Investment per pupil in instructional materials against the statewide average; and~~
  - ~~c.—Investment in instructional staff per pupil against the statewide average;~~
  - ~~d.—Investment in services to student subpopulations against the statewide average.~~

The revised diagnostic screen will provide LEAs with a clear normative and criterion-based view of their priority school or schools' performance and organizational strengths and weaknesses. This view into the school and district serves threetwo important functions.

First, it harnesses RIDE's capacity to support LEAs by delivering a high-quality, comprehensive, and accurate needs analysis. With a RIDE-managed diagnostic screen, all ~~priority schools will~~ Priority Schools receive diagnostic data that (1) includes measures beyond the reach and/or of capacity of LEAs, (2) assures that all student subpopulation performance will be disaggregated down to the most granular form possible, (3) ~~links system performance with expenditure data, and~~ (4) connects the data collected through federal programs to LEA decisions about intervention systems and strategies.

Second, by leading the identification process with a state-administered diagnostic screen, the state ~~can hold~~ holds LEAs accountable for all intervention decisions that follow. Rather than naming schools and simultaneously collecting an improvement plan *along with* evidence of LEA completion of a needs assessment, this system ~~will require~~ requires shared acknowledgement of the results of the screening process *before* LEAs begin selecting intervention strategies. This sequence, coupled with ~~the insertion of~~ required Commissioner-level approval of ~~priority school~~ Priority School intervention plans, enables RIDE to hold LEAs highly accountable to the results of the diagnostic screen.

~~Finally, the diagnostic screen will be built to reflect the architecture of Rhode Island's Basic Education Program (BEP), the most influential and wide-sweeping education regulation in Rhode Island. The BEP utilizes a matrix of seven LEA functions and four LEA capacities to create 28 critical areas of LEA performance. [See Appendix B for the 28 BEP performance measures.]~~

~~The 28 performance areas of the BEP reflect a matrix that spans seven LEA functions, which are closely aligned to the seven turnaround principles:~~

- ~~a) *Lead the Focus on Learning and Achievement:* The LEA shall provide on-site direction that continuously guides site-based leadership; identify expectations and accountability for implementation of proven practices; and address barriers to implementation of identified educational goals.~~

- ~~b) *Recruit, Support, and Retain Highly Effective Staff:* The LEA shall recruit, identify, mentor, support, and retain effective staff; build the capacity of staff to meet organizational expectations; and provide job-embedded professional development based on student need.~~
- ~~c) *Guide the Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:* The LEA shall provide access to rigorous, guaranteed, and viable curricula for all students; ensure differentiated instructional strategies, materials, and assessments; and build systems that provide opportunities for common planning and assessment.~~
- ~~d) *Use Information for Planning and Accountability:* The LEA shall develop and implement proficiency-based comprehensive assessment systems; distribute results of measured school progress and student performance; and maintain responsive and accessible information systems.~~
- ~~e) *Engage Families and the Community:* The LEA shall implement effective family and community communication systems; engage families and the community to promote positive student achievement and behavior; and provide adult and alternative learning opportunities integrated with community needs.~~
- ~~f) *Foster Safe and Supportive Environments for Students and Staff:* The LEA shall address the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students; ensure safe school facilities and learning environments; and require that every student has at least one adult accountable for his or her learning.~~
- ~~g) *Ensure Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources:* The LEA shall identify and provide requisite resources to meet student needs; allocate fiscal and human resources based on student need; and overcome barriers to effective resource allocation at the school level.~~

~~The crosswalk of these seven LEA functions to the four BEP capacities will provide LEAs and priority schools with an overall picture of their performance, strengths, and weaknesses. The diagnostic screen will generate an LEA and school-level report with overall conclusions in the four LEA capacities described in the BEP:~~

- ~~(1) *Leadership:* the capacity to mobilize people to focus and tackle hard issues, thrive, and be accountable for improving the educational system~~
- ~~(2) *Content:* the capacity to establish and implement high quality, rigorous, and meaningful learning standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction that leads to student success in college, careers, and life~~
- ~~(3) *Infrastructure:* the capacity to organize, coordinate, and allocate the necessary resources and information to support a high-performing education system~~
- ~~(4) *Personnel Supports:* the capacity to organize and create responsive, active, and dynamic growth and development mechanisms for improving adult learning and practice.~~

RIDE will design and administer the diagnostic screen utilizing current data collections. However, LEAs have access to school-level data that are not part of RIDE's current data collection system, yet still contribute toward a rich picture of overall system performance. To that end, LEAs will be encouraged to augment the results of the diagnostic screen with additional data that will support valid inferences and root cause analysis. For all ~~priority schools~~ Priority Schools, the results of the RIDE-administered screen, coupled with LEA additions, will be presented and discussed at an initial "SEA/LEA data meeting." This meeting, along with the data and reports that inform the discussion, will serve as the foundation for the next task in Stage One.

### ***LEA Selection of an Intervention ~~Model~~ Approach***

After the results of the diagnostic screen are shared, the ~~LEA will~~ LEAs have ~~90 business~~ 45 calendar days to select their intervention ~~model~~ approach. RIDE's proposed intervention approach reflects a combination of the most powerful elements of the 1003(g) requirements and the seven federal turnaround principles. Although the four 1003(g) intervention models brought problematic rigidity, they were successful in requiring LEAs to engage in hard conversations with stakeholders, scrutinize systems and practices, review investment decisions, and initiate bold change with urgency.

RIDE's intervention system attempts to maintain this sense of productive urgency and commitment to bold reform while at the same time, introducing greater LEA opportunity to construct a clear connection between the *reasons* for school underperformance and the selected intervention strategies. ~~To that end, Rhode Island's intervention system will continue with a model-based approach to school intervention. LEAs will be~~ required to select one of three intervention ~~models~~ approaches for each Priority ~~school~~. ~~Implementation for all priority schools will begin during the 2012-2013 school year and full implementation in all Priority schools begin no later than the 2013-2014 year.~~ School.

### **Description of the Three ~~Models~~ Approaches**

#### ***Closure:***

School closure occurs when an LEA closes the identified school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other public schools within the state that are higher achieving. These other schools should be within a reasonable proximity to the closed school and may include, but are not limited to, charter schools or new schools for which achievement data are not yet available.

This ~~model~~ approach remains consistent with the requirements set forth under School Improvement 1003(g).

Since the implementation of this waiver, one school was closed through consolidation within its district. The results of the newly consolidated school are under close observation through the Rhode Island accountability system.

### **Restart:**

A restart model approach is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes it and reopens a new school ~~under one of the following mechanisms: (1) as:~~

- ~~(1) a regional collaborative organized pursuant to RIGL Chapter 16-3.1;~~
- ~~(2) a charter school operator or a charter management organization or similarly independent entity that materially changes school operations;~~
- ~~(3) an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process; or,~~
- ~~(4) the creation of a joint Labor/Management Compact detailing reciprocal obligations that create a new management structure with shared decision-making designed to fully address the needs of each student in the school and which fully complies with all other applicable requirements.~~

A restart model school must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school.

Approval of a restart model requires the Commissioner to agree that the entity chosen by the LEA, through a process that adheres to local and state procurement requirements, is sufficiently vetted to reasonably ensure that the performance of the school under its management will significantly outperform the past performance of the school on measures to be determined by the Commissioner of Education. ~~RIDE will develop a list of pre-approved CMO's and EMO's that meet the requisite state criteria, although nothing shall prevent an LEA from forwarding a specific CMO or EMO to the Commissioner, notwithstanding the state's development of a pre-approved list of such providers.~~

Rhode Island's proposed restart model approach is consistent with the requirements set forth under School Improvement 1003(g). Furthermore, schools choosing the restart model approach will be required to construct a school reform plan that covers all seven federal turnaround principles, a condition of Commissioner approval.

~~Regardless of the nature of their restart, schools implementing this model will be required to implement three core school improvement strategies supported through Race to the Top and/or state educational regulations:~~

- ~~(1) Full staff participation in training to support **school-wide transition to the Common Core State Standards**, including:
  - ~~a. An aggressive schedule for transition to the CCSS including statewide study of the standards;~~
  - ~~b. Development and/or adoption of CCSSO-aligned curriculum; and~~
  - ~~c. Scaling of CCSSO exposure activities to every teacher in every building by the 2012-2013 academic year~~~~

- ~~(2) Full staff participation in **Rhode Island's educator and administrator evaluation** system, including:~~
- ~~a. Rigorous evaluation of every teacher in Rhode Island by the conclusion of the 2012-2013 academic year; and~~
  - ~~b. Utilization of a RIDE-approved teacher evaluation system that utilizes student growth data.~~
- ~~(3) **Utilization of a comprehensive data system** used to inform daily instruction and school planning, including an~~
- ~~a. Instructional Support System that provides an array of CCSS-aligned assessment and instructional tools;~~
  - ~~b. Curriculum and lesson planning development and sharing tools;~~
  - ~~c. Student growth visualization tool that enables teachers to view and track student progress;~~
  - ~~d. Comprehensive classroom-based RTI tools that enable highly granular tracking of interventions and student response to intervention, including specialized modules for English Learners and students with disabilities; and~~
  - ~~e. Early warning system that identifies students manifesting early signs of dropout beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.~~

~~Since the implementation of this waiver, no identified school has selected the Restart Model.~~

**Flex Model Approach:**

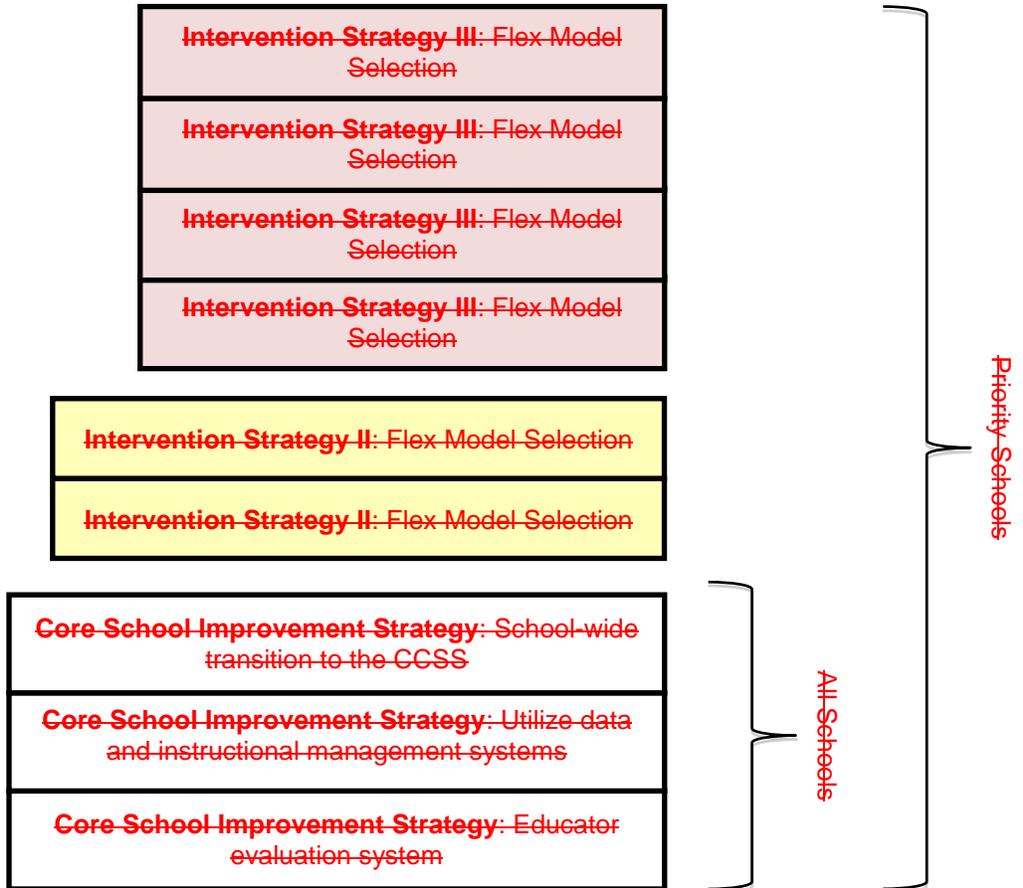
The Flex Model Approach requires districts to select a comprehensive package of intervention strategies from a RIDE-developed and managed list of 28 empirically proven intervention strategies. The LEA selection of the strategies must be: (1) coherent, (2) comprehensive, (3) responsive to the results of the diagnostic screen, and (4) ambitious but achievable.

The Flex Model Approach was designed to reflect the basic principles of response to intervention (RTI) by classifying 28 intervention strategies into three tiers based upon their intensity and scope. The Flex Model Approach will require priority schools LEAs and Priority Schools to select and implement no fewer than nine intervention strategies of their choice. The nine strategies include three (3) Tier I, or *core school improvement strategies*; two (2) Tier II, or *intervention II strategies* that provide important supplements to a comprehensive reform plan; and four (4) Tier III, or *intervention III strategies*.

~~(4) Tier III, or *intervention III strategies*.~~

~~See Figure 3 for a summary of the Flex Model's tiered approach to intervention.~~

**Figure 3: Tiered Intervention through the Flex Model**



Core school improvement strategies are required of all Rhode Island schools through either state regulation or commitments made under Race to the Top. Priority schools will have additional accountability and regular performance monitoring of their implementation of three core school improvement strategies:

**Core Improvement Strategy One:** Full staff participation in training to support school-wide transition to the Common Core State Standards. They include full implementation of the Common Core State Standards, including:

- a. An aggressive schedule for transition to the CCSS including statewide study of the standards;
- b. Development and/or adoption of CCSS-aligned curriculum; and
- c. Scaling of CCSS exposure activities to every teacher in every building by the 2012-2013 academic year.

~~Core Improvement Strategy Two: Full staff~~ participation in Rhode Island’s educator and administrator evaluation system, ~~including:~~

- ~~a. Rigorous evaluation of every teacher in Rhode Island by the conclusion of the 2012-2013 academic year; and~~
- ~~b. Utilization of a RIDE-approved teacher evaluation system that utilizes student growth data.~~

~~Core Improvement Strategy Three: Utilization and utilization~~ of a comprehensive data system used to inform daily instruction and school planning, ~~including an. RIDE maintains a strong commitment to ensuring high quality implementation of these strategies for all schools, and in particular for those identified through our accountability system.~~

- ~~a. Instructional Support System that provides an array of CCSS-aligned assessment and instructional tools;~~
- ~~b. Curriculum and lesson planning development and sharing tools;~~
- ~~c. Student growth visualization tool that enables teachers to view and track student progress;~~
- ~~d. Comprehensive classroom-based RTI tools that enable highly granular tracking of interventions and student response to intervention, including specialized modules for English Learners and students with disabilities; and Early warning system that identifies students manifesting early signs of dropout beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.~~

**Alignment of Core Improvement Strategies and Seven Turnaround Principles**

Core Strategy	Turnaround Principle i	Turnaround Principle ii	Turnaround Principle iii	Turnaround Principle iv	Turnaround Principle v	Turnaround Principle vi	Turnaround Principle vii
One				X			
Two	X	X					
Three				X	X	X	

Through ~~full implementation of the three required these~~ core school improvement strategies, all ~~priority schools will be addressing~~ Priority Schools address five of the seven turnaround principles.

LEAs and Priority Schools will select the remainder of their reform strategies from

RIDE’s Flex Menu of interventions. This menu was developed to ensure that the strategies would be

- (1) Aligned to the seven federal turnaround principles;
- (2) Empirically-proven, and responsive to the needs of both students and schools;
- (3) Feasible and scalable within systems of radically difference sizes and needs;

- (4) Focused on the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners;
- (5) Grouped in a manner that demands difficult decisions but high-yield opportunities for affected LEAs.

Intervention III strategies are classified as intensive reform strategies. They are characterized by one or more of the following:

- (1) Revision ~~revision~~ to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement or past practice; and/or;
- (2) Comprehensive ~~comprehensive~~ changes to the leadership and/or governance structure of the school; and/or;
- (3) Comprehensive, comprehensive changes to the system of curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment.

Intervention II strategies are empirically proven approaches to school turnaround and/or improvement that address discrete, identified needs of schools, staff, or students.

Intervention II strategies vary in intensity and scope ~~and are characterized by one or more of the following characteristics:~~ They may require additional resourcing to support implementation; supplement – rather than comprehensively redesign – a system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, student support, leadership, or family and community engagement; and/or address a unique and discrete identified need within the school.

- (1) ~~Requires additional resourcing to support implementation; and/or~~
- (2) ~~Supplements—rather than comprehensively redesigns—a system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, student support, leadership, or family and community engagement; and/or~~
- (3) ~~Addresses a unique and discrete identified need within the school.~~

From three years of implementation, we have learned that LEAs and Priority School leaders often have a clear vision of an essential strategy for addressing the reasons for the school’s low performance. While these strategies often fall within the bounds of one of the 28 interventions on the Flex Menu, there are times that they pull together portions of multiple interventions or are not truly reflected there at all. For this reason, we are providing the opportunity for LEAs and Priority schools to propose a locally-created Intervention Strategy as one of the six total required under the Flex Approach. Locally-created strategies will be reviewed using the same criteria as Flex Menu strategies. In addition, their alignment to the Seven Turnaround Principles and the scope of their expected impact will be considered. A locally-created Intervention Strategy may only qualify as an Intervention III Strategy if it will impact the whole school and addresses one of the four capacity areas (Leadership, Support, Infrastructure, and Content) not already addressed by the other selections.

The list of strategies and requirements for ~~priority schools~~ Priority Schools are described in detail in Table 7 on the following page.

**Table 7: Flex Model Intervention Approach Strategy Options for Priority Schools**

<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>	<i>Content</i>
<b>Intervention III Strategies: Priority schools select one from each area</b>			
L-III.1: Removal of building principal and replacement with a leader with experience and/or training in turnaround environments	S-III.1: Require at least 30 hours of focused professional development with a focus on instructional strategies to support students with disabilities and English Learners	I-III.1: Implement staff recommitment process to substantially different working conditions, including definition of school hours, job assignment, and job duties	C-III.1: Implement comprehensive improvement of instructional approaches for struggling students including focused professional development and a system for student progress monitoring
L-III.2: Restructure building leadership team to dramatically increase time available for instructional leadership	S-III.2: Hire building-level instructional specialists to support educators to serve English Learners, students with disabilities, and other students at risk for failure	I-III.2: Dramatically increase common planning time and implement a system for its effective utilization, both horizontally and vertically	C-III.2: Review student course-taking patterns and make substantial changes to school schedule and student placement to ensure access to rigorous academic core
L-III.3: Provide building administrators the authority and autonomy to hire, manage teacher placement, budget, and school schedule	S-III.3: Implement a system of peer support and assistance to support the needs of educators	I-III.3: Review and change student enrollment and placement processes to increase family engagement & improve student outcomes	C-III.3: Implement a culturally competent support system to improve safety, reduce suspensions, increase attendance, and support all students
<b>Intervention II Strategies: Priority Schools select two strategies from areas of their choice</b>			
L-II.1: Evaluate the principal and connect him or her with a mentor or appropriate resources to ensure ability to lead the school reform work	S-II.1: Implement a comprehensive drop-out prevention and reentry program	I-II.1: Complete an external audit of the use of school funds to guide staffing decisions and implement findings	C-II.1: Increase advanced coursework opportunities for students
L-II.2: Evaluate, assess, and diagnose the performance of the existing school leadership team and take appropriate job action	S-II.2: Implement a comprehensive ramp-up program for students at-risk of failure or subpopulations with the largest achievement gaps	I-II.2: Reallocate resources to increase support for direct instruction of students at risk for failure	C-II.2: Assign additional instructional coaches or other core content focused, job-embedded support for teachers
L-II.3: Contract with a vendor or partner with a track record of success to support the leadership team in school turnaround	S-II.3: Implement culturally competent family and community engagement program focused on instruction and academic performance	I-II.3: Develop and implement support systems for student transition into kindergarten and/or across break grades	C-II.3: Offer virtual education options for both at-risk and advanced students
L-II.4: Identify one leader to routinely monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the core curriculum/instruction and services to traditionally underserved students	S-II.4: Hire full time parent/community engagement specialist to implement family and community engagement that is systemic, sustained, and integrated with school improvement	I-II.4: Establish a comprehensive system to support struggling teachers with content and pedagogy, especially teachers of students with disabilities and English Learners	C-II.4: Implement an instructional monitoring system to ensure that the curriculum is being fully implemented and traditionally underserved students have access to academic core
L-II.5: Assign family/community outreach to member of leadership team and hold him/her accountable	S-II.5: Establish flexible or expanded learning opportunities with a focus on students at risk for failure	I-II.5: Implement a culturally competent tiered system of support focused on student psycho-social health	C-II.5: Increase student access to career, technical, or credentialing programs

Rhode Island and national experience with LEA behavior when addressing the requirements of Section 1116 and the 1003(g) indicates that most LEAs will select the Flex Model for their Priority and Focus schools. The anticipated popularity of the Flex Model requires that the intervention strategies included are:

- (6)• ~~Aligned to the seven federal turnaround principles;~~
- (7)• ~~Empirically proven, and responsive to the needs of both students and schools;~~
- (8)• ~~Feasible and scalable within systems of radically difference sizes and needs;~~
- (9)• ~~Focused on the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners;~~
- (10)• ~~Grouped in a manner that demands difficult decisions but high yield opportunities for affected LEAs.~~

Since the implementation of the waiver, eight priority schools have selected and implemented the Flex Model.

### Intervention System Alignment to Seven Federal Turnaround Principles

RIDE’s intervention system is aligned to and fully covers the seven federal turnaround principles. Schools selecting the restart model approach will be required to submit a school reform plan that covers the seven turnaround principles and will be required to implement the three core school improvement strategies described above. Schools selecting the Flex Model Approach will be selecting from a list of intervention strategies that have already been aligned to the seven turnaround principles. A crosswalk of the 28 intervention strategies of the Flex Model Approach with the seven turnaround principles is provided in Table 8.2 below.

**Table 8: Crosswalk of Flex Model Intervention Approach Strategies and Seven Turnaround Principles**

<i>Federal Turnaround Principle</i>	<i>Strategy</i>							
<b>Principle 1:</b> Leadership	L-III.1	L-III.2	L-III.3	L-II.1	L-II.2	L-II.3	L-II.4	L-II.5
<b>Principle 2:</b> Effective teachers	S-III.1	S-III.2	S-III.3	C-II.2	I-II.4	Core 2		
<b>Principle 3:</b> Redesigning school day, week, year	I-III.1	I-III.2	C-III.2	S-II.5	I-II.3	C-II.3		
<b>Principle 4:</b> Instructional program	C-III.1	C-III.2	C-II.5	C-II.4	C-II.3	C-II.1	Core 1 & 3	
<b>Principle 5:</b> Using data	S-III.3	I-III.3	S-III.2	I-III.2	I-II.1	C-II.4	Core 3	
<b>Principle 6:</b>	I-III.3	C-III.3	S-II.5	S-II.1	S-II.2	I-II.5	Core 3	

School climate								
<b>Principle 7:</b> Family and community engagement	S-II.3	S-II.4	L-II.5					

### **Commissioner Approval of the LEA Selection of a School Intervention**

#### **Model Approach**

After selecting a school intervention model approach, the LEA must submit theirs selection and its rationale to the Commissioner for review and approval. The authority of the Commissioner to approve or reject LEA model approach selection is currently part of RIDE’s system for intervening in persistently lowest-achieving schools and codified in both state statute and regulation.

In the event that an LEA selects the Flex Model Approach, the LEA must submit the package of six selected intervention strategies– along with three core improvement strategies- for each priority school. Priority School. The Commissioner will havehas thirty business days to review the selection and approve or reject the model approach selection. It will beis during this period that LEAs will beare held rigorously accountable to the results of the diagnostic screening process and coverage of all seven turnaround principles. Intervention model approach selections that fail to boldly and clearly address the student and system needs jointly identified through the diagnostic screening process and data meeting willare not be approvable.

#### **LEA Development of a School Reform Plan**

After Commissioner approval of the LEA intervention model approach, LEAs will beare provided another 90 business45 calendar days to develop a comprehensive, three-year school reform plan that includes the following elements:

- (1)• \_\_\_\_\_ A detailed plan for the implementation of their selected model approach that fully and comprehensively addresses all seven turnaround principles and clearly outlines LEA responsibilities and school responsibilities;
- (2)• \_\_\_\_\_ A resourcing plan for their selected model approach, including detailed information about the sustainable, scalable investment of newly available funding and fund flexibility afforded through the waiver;
- (3)• \_\_\_\_\_ Detailed timelines and milestones for year 1 for both LEA and quarterly milestones for years school responsibilities; and, 2-3;
- (4)• \_\_\_\_\_ Leading indicators and student outcomes measures for each major element of thethe school reform plan , including both LEA and school level indicators. For LEAs selecting the Flex Model Approach, leading indicators and student outcome targets will be required for each of the selected intervention strategies.

## Stage 2: Implementation and Progress Monitoring (Years 2-3)

~~During the second stage of implementation of the school reform plan, Priority schools will be in early implementation (Year 1) and full implementation (Year 2). During this period, Stage two is characterized by regular and intensive progress monitoring will mark the SEA/LEA relationship as well as communication and collaboration.~~ This stage includes three tasks.

- ~~(1) Implementation of the intervention model;~~
- ~~(2) Quarterly review of leading indicators and implementation status; and~~
- ~~(3) Regular communication and collaboration.~~

Table 9 summarizes the key functions of each of the ~~five~~ tasks associated with ~~Stage One: Diagnosis and Intervention Planning~~ Two: Implementation and Progress Monitoring and further detail is presented below.

Task	Intended Function	SEA	LEA	School
<b>Task 1: Implementation of the Intervention Model Approach</b>	Implementation of strategies included in approved school reform plan		☑	☑
	Establishment of performance monitoring system to enable regular review	☑	☑	☑
<b>Task 2: Quarterly review of indicators &amp; implementation status</b>	Design and execution of quarterly performance review meetings	☑		
	LEA presentation of progress against targets, leading indicators, and strategy implementation status	☑	☑	☑
	RIDE overall assessment of LEA implementation for all priority schools	☑		
	Set and maintain clear expectations for system performance and consequences for success and failure	☑		
<b>Task 3: Regular Communication and Collaboration</b>	Hold <del>monthly</del> regular meetings with LEA leadership teams supporting priority schools	☑	☑	☑
	Minimize administrative burden and expedite services for all LEAs serving priority schools	☑		
	Collaborative problem-solving to eliminate administrative, bureaucratic, or regulatory barriers to implementation of School Reform Plan	☑	☑	

### ***Implementation of the Intervention Model Approach***

~~Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, all Priority schools will be in the early implementation period and required to implement a significant number—though not all—the intervention strategies that are part of their selected and approved school~~

intervention model. [See Appendix C for a detailed implementation timeline for Priority and Focus schools.]

~~Since the implementation of the Waiver, all Priority Schools have begun full implementation of their turnaround plans.~~

Prior to the waiver, LEAs that were previously required to reserve up to equivalent of 20% of their Title I award for supplemental educational services and 10% for professional development under ESEA section 1116 will be provided the flexibility to reinvest the equivalent of the reserve. This ~~will be~~ was done in close collaboration with RIDE staff and ~~must adhere~~ adheres to the following broad parameters:

- Focused on clearly defined school and district improvement strategies that are explicitly connected to the improvement plans for Priority, and Focus, ~~and Warning schools~~ Schools;
- Responsive to the needs of traditionally underserved populations, including English learners and students with disabilities (when applicable); and
- Focused upon direct services to students and classroom teachers.

~~LEAs reinvesting previously held reserves will do so through the state consolidated application and must meet these broad requirements in addition to all other Title I Part A requirements to receive RIDE approval.~~

Schools selecting the Restart or Flex ~~Model will be~~ Approach are required to establish a rich and detailed set of ~~annual~~ performance targets that correspond to each major element of their ~~model~~ approach. These will serve as the foundation for the quarterly progress monitoring that will be maintained throughout ~~stage two~~ Stage Two.

### ***Quarterly Review of Leading Indicators and Implementation Status***

The majority of SEA resources will be dedicated to intensive quarterly progress monitoring of implementation and tracking the leading indicators included in each school reform plan. This progress monitoring will take the form of quarterly data meetings between the SEA, LEA, and LEA schools. During these quarterly data meetings, LEAs ~~will be~~ are expected to present their progress against the performance targets established in the school reform plan.

During the early implementation year (~~SY12-13~~ Year 1), Priority ~~schools will be~~ Schools and their LEAs are held accountable for:

- (1) ~~Implementation~~ implementation targets, ~~i.e. such as the~~ establishment of systems, delivery of professional development, and investment of resources; ~~and~~
- (2) ~~Leading, as well as leading~~ indicators, ~~i.e. such as~~ student attendance rates, referral and suspension rates, and parent/family participation and engagement rates.

~~During the early implementation year, Stage 2 (Years 2 and 3), all Priority schools will be expected to achieve at least 80% of their established improvement targets.~~

~~During the second year of Stage 2 (SY13-14), all Priority schools~~ Schools will be fully implementing all elements of their intervention model. Consequently, the nature of the performance targets for each school will also shift to include: not only implementation targets and leading indicators, but also student outcome data such as state assessment results and graduation rates.

- ~~(1) Implementation targets,~~
- ~~(2) Leading indicators, and~~
- ~~(3) Student outcome data, i.e. state assessments results, graduation rates, ELLs exiting programs, etc.~~

~~During the second year of full implementation, all Priority schools will be expected to achieve at least 80% of their established improvement targets.~~

~~Student outcomes for 2012-13 school year were assessed in October of 2013 and analyzed in February 2014. For the 2013-14 school year these data will become available for identified Priority high schools during the fall NECAP administration in October of 2014.~~ Subsequent to the PARCC transition, the data for all levels for a given school year will be assessed at the conclusion of the ~~2014-15~~ school year.

### Stage 3: Rising Priority Through Exit and Priority, Caution (Years 3-5)

During the third stage of the intervention system, all Priority ~~schools~~Schools will be ~~intoin~~ their third ~~year of implementation and second~~ or ~~fourth~~ year of full implementation of their school intervention ~~model~~approach. For more information about stage three, please see section 2(d)iv.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA’s choice of timeline.

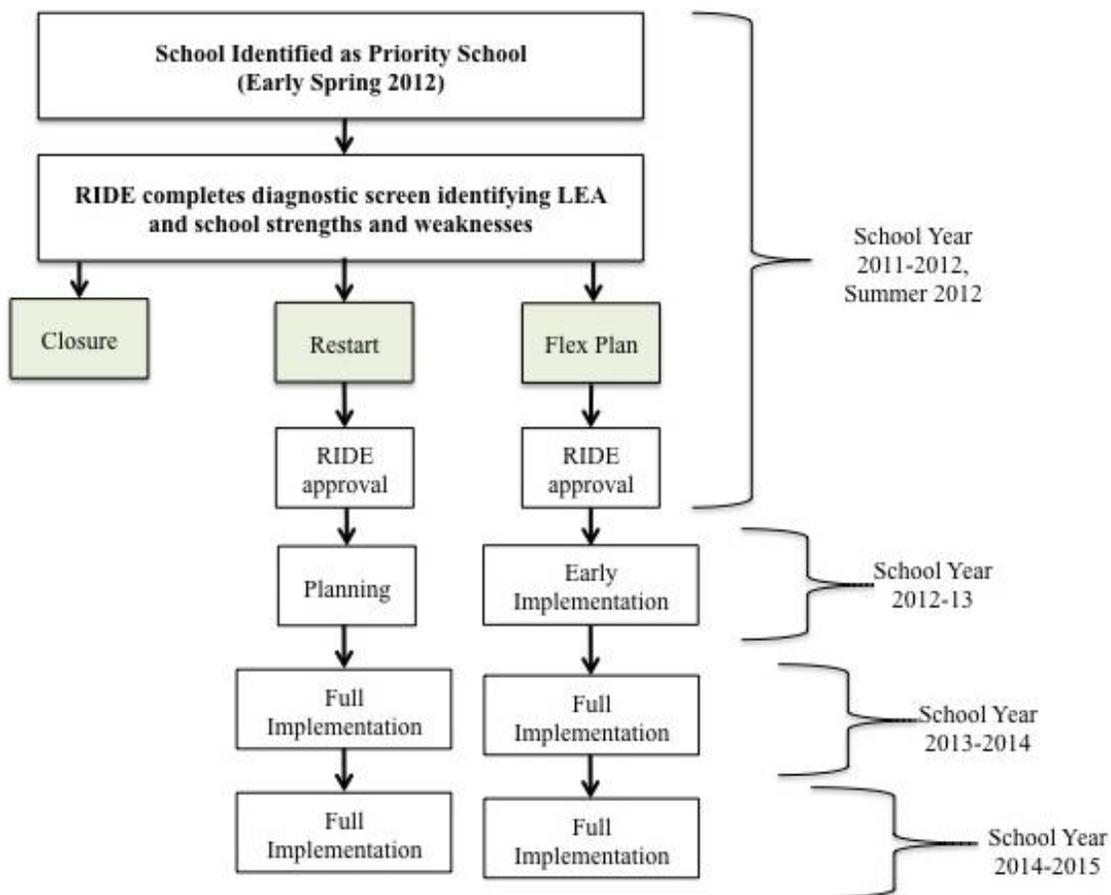
During the 2012 and 2013 academic years, RIDE identified a full set of Priority Schools. During the period covered under our approved waiver extension – the 2014-15 school year -- RIDE suspended the practice of identifying new Priority Schools. This suspension is the result of extensive consultation with practitioners and stakeholders. During this consultation, there was agreement that it was both appropriate and reasonable to dedicate the 2014-15 school year to a rigorous and transparent review of the emerging PARCC data, to develop a collective understanding of the results, and to use those results to resume labeling beyond the 2014-15 school year. Schools already identified as Priority Schools that have not successfully exited will remain so-classified. Schools eligible for exit based upon performance will retain their ability to do so. Under this waiver renewal, RIDE will once again identify new Priority Schools based on the results of the spring 2016 PARCC exams.

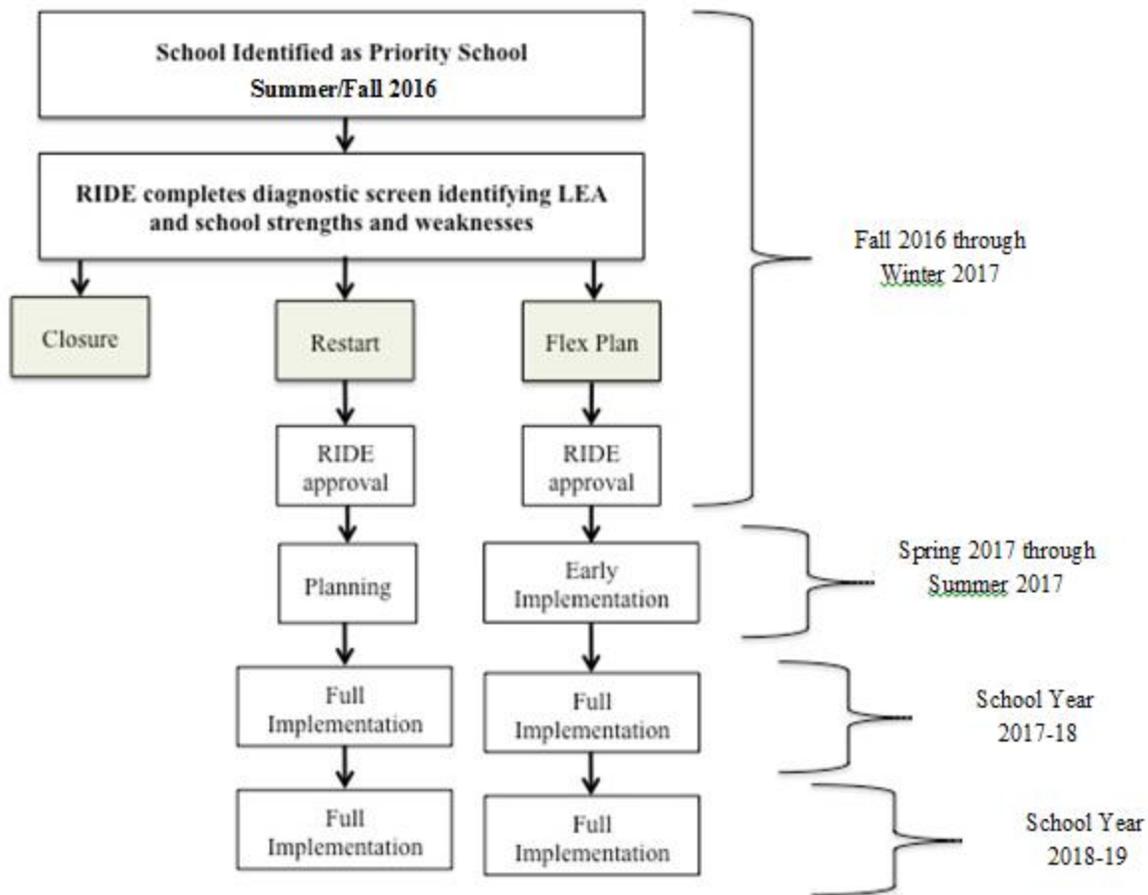
The proposed intervention system ensures that all newly-identified Priority ~~schools~~Schools will be in early implementation – actively implementing most elements of their selected intervention ~~model~~approach – by the ~~2012-2013~~second half of the 2016-17 school year. All ~~priority schools~~newly-identified Priority Schools will be in full implementation by the ~~2013-2014~~2017-18 school year.

RIDE will be formally identifying only one cohort of Priority schools under the life of this waiver application. However, during the waiver period, Focus schools may be accelerated into Priority status. The timeline governing this single cohort of Priority schools is summarized in Figure 4 below. [See Appendix C for a more detailed implementation timeline for Priority schools.]

During the 2012 and 2013 academic years, RIDE identified a full set of Priority schools. During the period covered under this waiver extension — the 2014-2015 school year, RIDE will suspend the practice of identifying new priority schools. This suspension of the priority label is the result of extensive consultation with practitioners and stakeholders. During this consultation, both formal and informal, there was agreement that it was both appropriate and reasonable to dedicate the 14-15 school year to a rigorous and transparent review of the emerging PARCC data, to develop a collective understanding of the results, and to use those results to resume labeling beyond the 14-15 school year. Schools already identified as Priority schools that have not successfully exited will remain so classified. Schools eligible for exit based upon performance will retain their ability to do so.

**Figure 2: Implementation Timeline for Priority Schools Identified Under the Waiver Renewal**





**Stage One: Diagnosis and Intervention Timeline  
and Early Spring 2012: All Implementation Timeline (Year 1)**

(1) Late Summer/Early Fall Year One: All new Priority schools identified and diagnostic screen administered

(2) Late Spring 2012: All/Fall Year One: LEAs for all newly-identified Priority schools Schools select intervention model approach and submit for Commissioner approval

Summer 2012: All

(3) Winter Year One: LEAs and newly-identified Priority schools Schools develop their school reform plan

(4) Summer 2012: RIDE approves school reform plans

Spring Year One: Early implementation for all newly-identified Priority Schools

**Stage One Timeline Justification**

National research on school turnaround and in particular, on the implementation of the four intervention models required under 1003(g) has indicated that schools need adequate time to plan and resource bold, comprehensive reform plans. Under this timeline, the first six months after identification are dedicated to urgent yet deliberate planning. This timeline is affected by two major factors:

- (1) *Rhode Island is a Fall Testing State.* Unlike most of the nation, Rhode Island administers the state assessment in October and releases results in February of each year. This annual cycle affects the timing of Rhode Island's ability to name Priority schools. The fall testing schedule timeline for grades 3-11 will be phased out in the 2014-15 school year as PARCC assessments are implemented and schools will be assessed in the Spring.
- (2) *Waiver approval will delay Rhode Island's ability to classify schools.* Although Rhode Island traditionally classifies schools in February, classification decisions for the 2011-2012 school year will be delayed until USED makes final decisions about Rhode Island's waiver application.

#### Stage **Two: Implementation and Progress Monitoring Timeline**

- (1) September 2012: All Priority schools begin early implementation of plan
- (2) School year 2012-2013: Early implementation with quarterly progress monitoring
- (3) June 2013: Year-end review
- (4) September 2013: All priority schools fully implement model
- (5) School Year 2013-2014: Full implementation with quarterly progress monitoring
- (6) June 2014: Year-end review One

#### **Stage Two Timeline Justification**

The implementation timeline affords LEAs a school year effor planning and "early implementation" during which mostsome, but not all, elements of their approved modelapproach must be implemented. This early-implementation period is included for two reasons:

- (1) *Not all intervention strategies should be implemented simultaneously.* National research has shown the importance of appropriately and thoughtfully staging elements of a major reform initiative to ensure that the overall scope of the effort is well timed, manageable, and coherent. The early implementation year enables LEAs to appropriately time the various elements of their reform efforts.
- (2) *Rhode Island Statutory requirements governing staffing changes affect LEA implementation timelines.* Currently, teachers facing potential layoff must receive formal notice by March 1. This deadline puts unreasonable strain on LEAs that, by that date, will have yet selected intervention model. June 1 of the previous school year. Through an early implementation period, LEAs can plan ahead for staffing changes.

We have extended the timeframe for Stage One from 6 months to a full school year for two reasons. First, the timing of the PARCC assessment and calendar for identification means that LEAs will learn that a school is Priority prior to or early in the school year immediately following the test. This greatly reduces the long delay that existed in the past between the school year of student learning, state assessments during the fall of the following school year, and results and identification not until the spring of the second school year.

Previously, Stage One began a full 12 months after the school year in which a school's student achievement fell. Under this revision, it can now begin 3 months after identification. Second, we have learned from monitoring that if the LEA has not set the necessary conditions for reform, such as scheduling, new leader on-boarding, and developing a coherent vision for change, it can take as much as 3 quarters of work for full implementation to gain traction. Our proposed revisions take advantage of the timing of our new assessment system to allow for more careful planning while still ensuring that schools and LEAs are beginning to implement a full school year sooner than was possible in the past. Stage One will therefore allow for a 6 month period for diagnosis and planning, followed by early implementation as schools and LEAs prepare for larger changes that are difficult to make mid-year, such as replacing leadership, restructuring the school schedule or calendar, or instituting a new instructional program.

### **Stage Two: Implementation and Progress Monitoring Timeline (Years 2 and 3)**

#### School Years 2 and 3:

All newly-identified Priority Schools in full implementation. RIDE conducts quarterly progress monitoring

#### Close of Year 2:

First opportunity for a Priority School to achieve first of two years towards exit criteria

#### Close of Year 3:

Second opportunity for a Priority School to achieve first of two years towards exit criteria

(7)

**Stage Two Timeline Justification:** Priority Schools will be eligible to achieve the first of 2 consecutive years of meeting exit criteria at the close of Year 2. These schools will receive the additional indicator of Rising and will enter Stage Three at the start of Year 3. This timeline will allow rapidly improving schools to exit after three years of participation in the school reform process and two years of full implementation of their intervention. Spring testing under PARCC allows us to measure the results of interventions at the close of each year, making it possible to analyze the effect of reform and substantial work undertaken during early implementation.

Experience and research indicates that in most cases reform requires 3-5 years of implementation to take hold. For this reason, we anticipate that most schools will not enter Stage Three until the close of Year 3 during the Year-end review described below.

### **Stage Three: Implementation Through Exit Timeline**

(1) School year 2014-2015: (Years 3 or 4-5): For rapidly improving schools only, Year 3 Full implementation with quarterly progress monitoring June 2015

(2) Close of Year 3: Year-end review

- First year that Priority schools are classified into “that were Rising” and “ may exit by meeting exit criteria for two consecutive school years subsequent to early implementation.
- First year that a Priority School shall, based on progress toward exit criteria, either:
  - Exit;
  - receive the additional indicator of Rising, or
  - receive the additional indicator of Caution.

Year 4

a.

- b. First possible year that a Priority ” status based upon School receiving the additional indicator of Caution could experience additional state intervention due to failure to implement and/or stagnant or falling performance

First

- Continued full implementation with quarterly progress monitoring

Year 5

e. Second possible year that a Priority school could exit through successful implementation and growth (1/2 year School receiving the additional indicator of planning, 1 year of early implementation, and 2 full years of implementation for Cohort III schools) Caution

- d. First possible year that a Priority school could experience additional state intervention due to failure to implement and/or stagnant or falling performance

School year 2015-16: Full

- (3) • Continued full implementation with quarterly progress monitoring

~~Implementation of RIDE’s proposed intervention system for Priority schools will require extensive preparation and planning, some of which is already well underway. In order to meet aggressive timelines for a projected mid-spring 2012 identification, RIDE and LEAs will need to adhere to a rigid implementation plan. Table 10 below summarizes the key milestones, responsible parties, and obstacles we anticipate.~~

### **Overall Timeline for Implementation**

~~RIDE will meet the federal requirement that all priority schools are fully implementing all elements of their approved plan and covering all seven turnaround principles by the 2013-2014 academic year. The chart below provides a summary of the timeline for implementation in Rhode Island.~~

### **Timelines for Priority schools identified prior to 2016**

The thirteen schools that were identified as PLAs and were reclassified as Priority Schools under the initial 2012 waiver will have completed at minimum 3 years of *full implementation* at the close of the 2014-15 school year. An additional eight schools were identified as Priority under RIDE’s previously approved waiver. Depending on the year of their identification, these schools will have completed 2 or 3 years of *full implementation* at the close of the 2014-15 school year. The transition to a new assessment system will delay RIDE’s ability to judge the progress of these 21 schools against the exit criteria. The next available student outcome data will be when PARCC results from the 2015 spring administration are released. As approved in our waiver extension, RIDE has determined that these results may afford Priority Schools the opportunity to proceed toward exit, but will not be used to assign the label of Caution to a school. For this reason, RIDE will not require that schools move into Stage 3 until results from the Spring 2016 PARCC assessment are available. This pause allows us to ensure that we have student outcome data for three full years of implementation prior to labeling a school Priority, Caution and considering additional state intervention.

A summary of the implementation timeline for previously-identified schools alongside the timeline for schools that are identified after the transition to PARCC is presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Implementation Timeline for Full Intervention Model: Timelines Comparison – Priority Schools**

School Type	Schools Identified prior to SY 2013-14	Schools Identified close of SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14
School Type	Schools Identified prior to SY 2013-14	Schools Identified close of SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14
School Type	Schools Identified prior to SY 2013-14	Schools Identified close of SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14	Schools Identified after SY 2013-14
<b>Cohort 1</b> All Priority schools (5 schools) identified prior to SY 2013-14	Full implementation (Year 3, 4, or 5) Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Continued Full Implementation	Full implementation (Year 3, 4, 5, or 6) Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution	Eligible for exit Possible additional SEA intervention Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution	Possible additional SEA intervention Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution	Possible additional SEA intervention Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution	Possible additional SEA intervention Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution
<b>Cohort 2</b> Priority schools (8 schools) identified close of SY 2013-14	Year 1 Early Implementation	Year 2 Full implementation Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Continued Full Implementation	Year 3 Full implementation Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Continued Full Implementation	Year 4 Full implementation Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution	Eligible for exit Year 5 Possible additional SEA intervention Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution	Year 6 Possible additional SEA intervention Close of Year Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution

"Pause": No new Priority schools will be identified at the close of 2014-15

<p>New Priority Schools newly named (5 schools; plus 3 additional schools falling from Focus to Priority) identified close of SY 2015-16</p>		<p><u>Year 1</u> Early Implementation</p>	<p><u>Year 2</u> Full implementation (<u>Close of Year 1</u>) Decision: • Rising • Continued Full Implementation</p>	<p><u>Year 3</u> Full implementation (<u>Close of Year 2</u>) Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution</p>	<p><u>Full implementation (Year 3)</u> (<u>Close of Year 3</u>) Possible additional SEA intervention Decision: • Rising • Exit • Caution</p>
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**Table 10: Planning for Intervening in Priority Schools**

<i>Milestone or Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Party Responsible</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Obstacles</i>
ID of SY12-13 priority schools	2/12	RIDE	CIS system	Staff time	Develop com strategy with
Public announcement of priority schools	5/12	RIDE	N/A	Redesigned school report cards; completed communication materials	Non
Revisions to consolidated application for federal funds	2/12—4/12	RIDE	Revised application and training materials	Staff time; funds for changes to web-based application	Completion and TA for aff on new fle
Training for affected LEAs	4/12	RIDE	N/A	Staff time	Non
Completion of diagnostic screening tool	2/12—4/12	RIDE	Complete screen	Staff time, funding for development	Staff time ar
Administration of diagnostic screen & data meetings	5/12	LEAs and RIDE	Complete reports & meetings	RIDE and LEA staff time	RIDE staf cap
LEA intervention model selection	6/12	LEA	Submission of model selection	LEA staff time	Non
RIDE approval of intervention model	5/12	RIDE	Approval/rejection letters	RIDE and LEA staff time	Non
LEA development of school reform plan	6/12—9/12	LEA	Submission of School reform plan	LEA staff time	LEA staff time
RIDE approval of school reform plan	9/12	RIDE	Approval/rejection letters	RIDE and LEA staff time	RIDE and LE & cap
Implementation of school reform	9/12—	LEA	Evidence of	RIDE and LEA staff	RIDE and LE



plan	9/13		implementation	time	and cap
Quarterly progress monitoring	9/12— 9/13	LEAs and RIDE	Quarterly reports and meetings	RIDE and LEA staff time; performance monitoring tools	RIDE and LE and capacity; monitorin

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

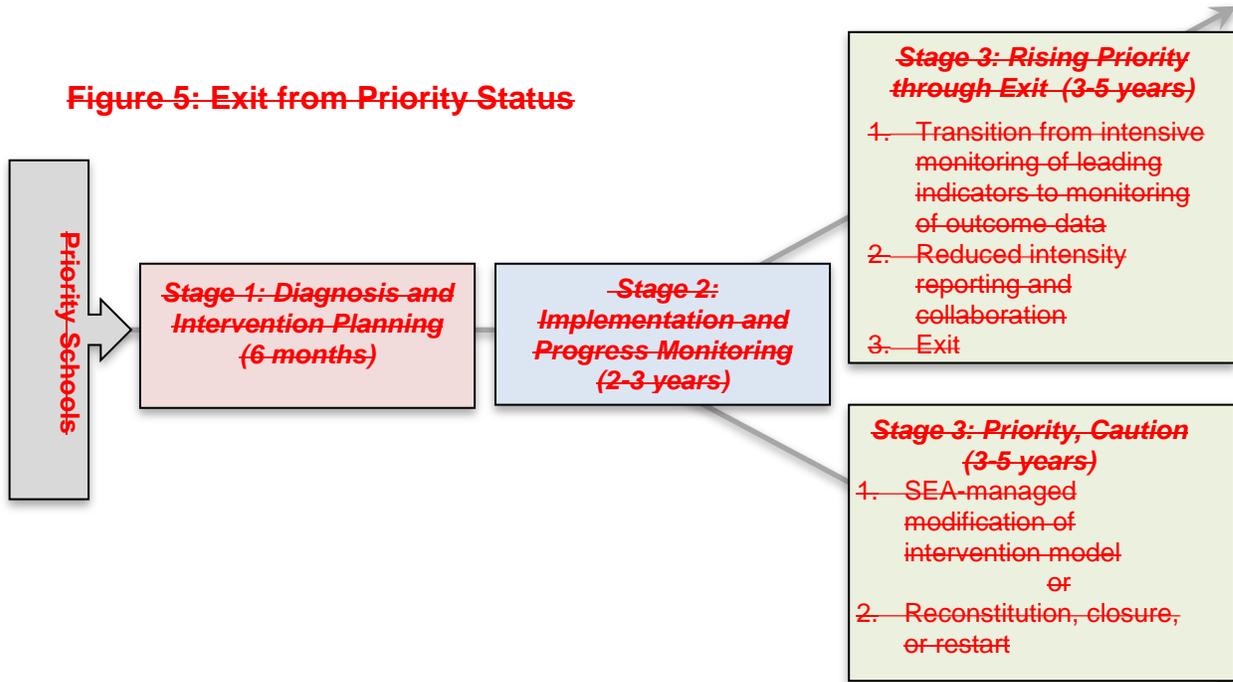
### **Exit Based Upon Performance**

Exit from Rhode Island’s intervention system occurs in Stage 3 of an LEA’s implementation of a school intervention ~~model approach~~, which covers years three through five (school years ~~14-15, 15-16~~2018-19, 2019-20, and beyond for ~~Cohort III~~)schools newly-identified under this waiver renewal.) See Figure 5 below for an overview of the stages and the criteria for exit. The system is designed to be rigorous, exiting schools only upon sustained improved performance ~~and in no case earlier than the 2015-2016 school year including schools previously identified as PLA which are now identified as Priority.~~ Rhode Island will ensure that there are meaningful consequences for priority and focus schools that do not make adequate progress after full implementation of interventions. ~~While the ability to ensure the efficacy of multi-year interventions remains a critical missing element of the ESEA, Rhode Island enjoys significant State statutory authority to “reconstitute” schools and districts that fail to meet established targets for three years.~~<sup>4</sup> ~~This dramatic level of intervention underscores the~~

<sup>4</sup>~~See, R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5 Intervention and support for failing schools. — (a) The Board of Regents shall adopt a series of progressive support and intervention strategies consistent with the Comprehensive Education Strategy and the principles of the "School Accountability for Learning and Teaching" (SALT) of the board of regents for those schools and school districts that continue to fall short of performance goals outlined in the district strategic plans. These strategies shall initially focus on: (1) technical assistance in improvement planning, curriculum alignment, student assessment, instruction, and family and community involvement; (2) policy support; (3) resource oversight to assess and recommend that each school has adequate resources necessary to meet performance goal; and (4) creating supportive partnerships with education institutions, business, governmental, or other appropriate nonprofit agencies. If after a three (3) year period of support there has not been improvement in the education of students as determined by objective criteria to be developed by the board of regents, then there shall be progressive levels of control by the department of elementary and secondary education over the school and/or district budget, program, and/or personnel. This control by the department of elementary and secondary education may be exercised in collaboration with the school district and the municipality. If further needed, the school shall be reconstituted. Reconstitution responsibility is delegated to the board of regents and may range from restructuring the school's governance, budget, program, personnel, and/or may include decisions regarding the continued operation of the school. The board of regents shall assess the district's capacity and may recommend the provision of additional district, municipal and/or state resources. If a school or school district is under the board of regents' control as a result of actions taken by the board pursuant to this section, the local school committee shall be responsible for funding that~~

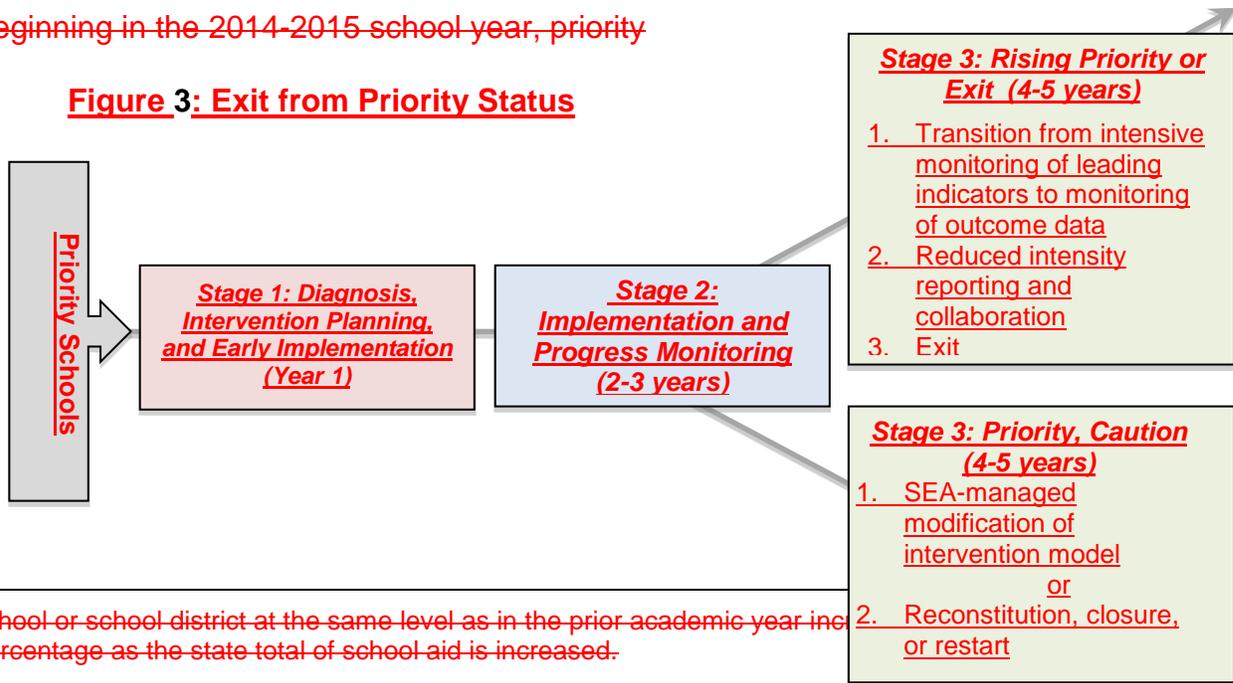
need for accurate information about improvement efforts on an ongoing basis. Accordingly, our proposed design also recognizes that mid-term judgments about performance are important tools in differentiating schools that are ambitiously, rigorously and successfully implementing their intervention plan from those that are failing to implement a model and/or reach performance targets.

**Figure 5: Exit from Priority Status**



Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, priority

**Figure 3: Exit from Priority Status**



school or school-district at the same level as in the prior academic year in percentage as the state total of school-aid is increased.

Priority schools in Stage 3 will be classified into one of two categories: “Priority, Rising Priority” and “Priority, Caution-”. This differentiation will be made on the basis of the school performance against the targets set forth in their approved plan as well as their AMOs. Priority school exit criteria. Priority Schools that, over the course of the first 2 ½ years subsequent to a full year of planning and early implementation have met 80% or more of their performance targets or met 80% of their AMOs, earn a CIS score in the range that is equivalent to a classification of Good Standing will be classified as “labeled Priority, Rising Priority,” indicating that the implementation of their reform agenda is on-track and that they are moving toward exit.

Alternatively, schools for which RIDE has three years of student outcome data subsequent to early implementation that have failed to reach in that time to achieve a CIS score in the 80% threshold in reaching their AMOs and have not demonstrated satisfactory progress towards meeting performance targets Good Standing range will be classified as “labeled Priority, Caution-”. Priority caution Caution indicates that the reform agenda is falling off-track and that, without improvement, the school will be at risk for more intensive state intervention as authorized under Rhode Island General Law.

~~The differentiation of Priority schools based upon mid-term performance is intended to provide LEAs and schools with early indications of their progress against the performance commitments set forth in their reform plan. In addition, it creates incentives for ambitious, urgent, and sustained implementation of the school reform plan during the first 24 months of implementation, a period that national research has found to be central to successful, durable improvement.~~

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### **Exit Criteria**

Priority schools ~~may not exit classification status before the conclusion of the 2015-2016 year, holding schools will be held~~ to 3 full-years of full model implementation before they are eligible for exit. The long period of classification ensures that all schools eligible for exit have provided adequate evidence of *sustained, durable, significant improvement*.

Eligibility for exit requires ~~schools to meet two of the following requirements:~~

- ~~(1) The school must have reached at least 80% of their performance targets annually for the first three years of implementation. These performance targets include:~~

- ~~a. Implementation targets, i.e. establishment of systems, delivery of professional development, investment of resources;~~
- ~~b. Leading indicators, i.e. student attendance rates, referral and suspension rates, and parent/family participation and engagement rates; and~~
- ~~(2) Student outcome data, i.e. state assessments results, graduation rates, ELLs exiting programs, etc.~~

~~Priority schools must reach 80% of their AMOs—including all missed targets substantially contributing to their original Priority status—for two consecutive years, or~~

- ~~(3) Priority schools~~Priority Schools must achieve a two-year long shift in rank ordering based upon composite index score that moves them into the “typical” categoryGood Standing category for the two most recent consecutive years of full implementation. Schools must meet the 95% test participation expectation for both years and in both content areas (English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics) in order to meet these exit criteria.

## 2.E Focus Schools

2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Focus Schools will ~~also~~ be identified by ~~its~~the Composite Index Score, (CIS) ~~and by lowest absolute), which will account for low proficiency and by the largest subgroup, large gaps, low growth, and low graduation rates.~~ RIDE ~~has done~~previously conducted extensive data runs that conclusively ~~show~~showed that any and all schools that meet the federal definitions for Focus ~~schools are~~Schools were in fact identified by ~~our proposed~~the methodology: in our

previously-approved waiver. We are confident that ~~this~~our proposed revisions to our methodology ~~meets~~meet the requirements of ESEA as our indexing system ~~and these two indicators account for largest subgroup performance gaps and lowest absolute performance and~~ identifies ~~these~~ schools by:

- Holding all schools in our state accountable for gaps in student achievement ~~because of our combined subgroup~~through the use of all schools’ lowest quartile of performers and our lower minimum  $n$  of 20.

- Providing an additional lens on student subgroup performance by accounting for growth within subgroups as part of the growth metric providing data on the demographic composition of the group of students in the school's lowest quartile of performers and of the group of students with an SGP of lower than 35.
- Continuing to include absolute performance as part of the identification of ~~focus schools~~ Focus Schools. This matters in Rhode Island because so many of our schools beyond the Priority Schools have extraordinarily low performance for all students. These schools typically serve primarily students living in poverty from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally many students in the Focus Schools receive English language or special education services.  
Including
  - Shining a spotlight on high schools that have graduation rates below 60%.

- All schools currently classified as Focus will remain Focus under this waiver renewal unless they have met exit criteria. Focus Schools meeting the exit criteria will be classified according to their CIS score. Focus Schools that have shown significant progress and are eligible to meet exit criteria based on the following year's test results will receive the additional indicator of Rising. See section 2(E)iv for two consecutive years-detailed information on exit criteria for Focus Schools.

As approved in our ESEA waiver extension request, RIDE will not classify new Focus Schools on the basis of the 2014-15 administration of PARCC. When results of the 2015-16 state testing cycle are available and the Composite Index Score is calculated based on the methodology described in section 2A, RIDE will identify any additional Focus Schools. RIDE will conduct analyses to ensure that the CIS identifies those schools with the lowest proficiency rates, largest gaps, low growth and lowest graduation rates.

Rhode Island ~~will have 10~~ currently has 11 Focus Schools representing more than 10% of our Title I schools. ~~These twelve schools have~~ At the time of identification data that ~~show~~ showed these schools demonstrated:

- Gaps in student performance that range from 27.2 to 77.8 percentage points.
- Absolute performance rates in the single digits in mathematics (eight schools range from 2% to 8% proficiency) and all have reading achievement rates between 37% and 55%.
- Levels of growth that make it impossible for students to become proficient if the rate remains constant.
- These schools have a CIS ranging from 36.5-57.

Since implementation of the Waiver, 3 ~~focus~~ Focus schools fell to Priority status, and 3 ~~Warning~~ schools fell into Focus status, leaving a net total of ~~4~~ 11 present Focus ~~schools~~ Schools with one school being labeled Focus, Rising.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA’s list of focus schools in Table 2.

<u>Focus Schools</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>Cohort</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>Alan Shawn Feinstein Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Esek Hopkins Middle</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Frank D. Spaziano Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>George J. West Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Harry Kizirian Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Nathan Bishop Middle</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>NEL/CPS Construction Career</u>	<u>Cranston - District Charter</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>Rising</u>
<u>Providence Career Technical</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Asa Messer Elementary</u>	<u>Providence</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Segue Institute for Learning</u>	<u>Independent Charter</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Veterans Memorial Elementary</u>	<u>Central Falls</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Flex</u>	<u>-</u>

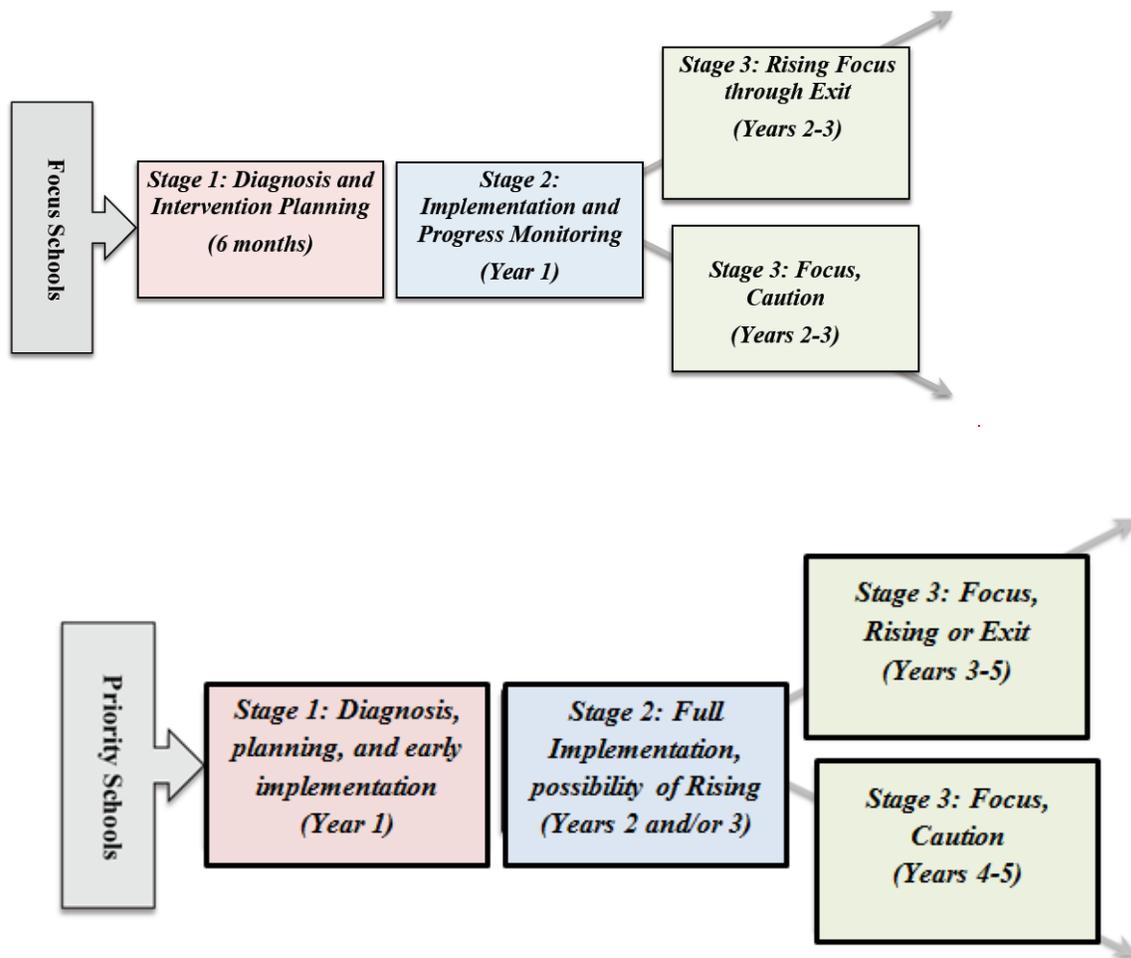
2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA’s focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

### Focus Schools Intervention System

Rhode Island’s proposed intervention system treats the category of Focus schools as one of both opportunity and responsibility for the SEA and LEA. Consequently, Focus ~~schools~~Schools travel through the same rigorous process described in Section 2(d)iii- and the same quarterly monitoring and data review through implementation as Priority Schools. Figure 6 below shows the three stages of implementation for Focus ~~schools~~Schools. These stages mirror those of Priority ~~schools~~Schools, with ~~two important differences:~~one exception: Focus Schools are eligible

- ~~(1) Focus schools are eligible~~ for exit after ~~2 ½ years~~1 year of early implementation (~~SY13-14~~), and 1 year of full implementation. This is one year earlier than Priority schools; and
- ~~(2) Focus Schools, like Priority Schools, have quarterly data meetings and performance monitoring from RIDE.~~

**Figure 4: Three Stages of Intervention, Focus Schools**



### **Focus Schools Diagnostic Screening**

Because Focus schools, like Priority schools, are identified based heavily upon their achievement and performance gaps, Focus schools receive the same diagnostic screening services provided to Priority schools. Please see Section 2diii for more information about the nature of the diagnostic screen.

### **Focus Schools Intervention Model/Approach Selection**

LEAs serving Focus schools will be required to select intervention strategies that are clearly responsive to the results of the diagnostic screen. Consequently, all Focus schools with ELLs/ELs and students with disabilities exhibiting significant achievement gaps will be required to select intervention strategies that specifically address the needs of these student subpopulations.

Like Priority ~~schools~~Schools, Focus ~~schools~~Schools must select from one of three intervention ~~models~~approaches within 90/45 calendar days of identification. ~~Regardless of their intervention model selection, all Focus schools will be required to implement the following three core school improvement strategies:~~

- ~~(1) Full staff participation in training to support school-wide transition to the Common Core State Standards, including:
  - ~~a. An aggressive schedule for transition to the CCSS including statewide study of the standards;~~
  - ~~b. Development and/or adoption of CCSS-aligned curriculum; and~~
  - ~~c. Scaling of CCSS exposure activities to every teacher in every building by the 2012-2013 academic year~~~~
  
- ~~(2) Full staff participation in Rhode Island's educator and administrator evaluation system, including:
  - ~~a. Rigorous evaluation of every teacher in Rhode Island by the conclusion of the 2012-2013 academic year; and~~
  - ~~b. Utilization of a RIDE-approved teacher evaluation system that utilizes student growth data.~~~~
  
- ~~(3) Utilization of a comprehensive data system used to inform daily instruction and school planning, including an
  - ~~a. Instructional Support System that provides an array of CCSS-aligned assessment and instructional tools;~~
  - ~~b. Curriculum and lesson-planning development and sharing tools;~~
  - ~~c. Student growth visualization tool that enables teachers to view and track student progress;~~
  - ~~d. Comprehensive classroom-based RTI tools that enable highly granular tracking of interventions and student response to intervention, including specialized modules for English Learners and students with disabilities; and~~
  - ~~e. Early warning system that identifies students manifesting early signs of dropout beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade.~~~~

The table below provides additional information on RIDE's capacity to support school implementation of the three core improvement strategies in support of traditionally underserved students.

Strategy	RIDE Support
<p><b>(1) Full staff participation in training to support school-wide transition to the Common Core State Standards, including:</b></p>	
<p><del>(4)</del>  <b>a. a-</b> An aggressive schedule for transition to the CCSS including statewide study of the standards;</p>	<p><b>Study of the Standards workshops:</b>  Study of the Standards workshops train core groups of teachers on the ELA and/or Mathematics standards</p>
<p><b>b.</b> Development and/or adoption of CCSS-aligned curriculum; and</p>	<p><b>Model Curricula:</b>  The Intensive Curriculum alignment work will have standards-aligned curricula in the four core content areas: science, mathematics, social studies and English Language Arts.</p>
<p><b>c.</b> Scaling of CCSS exposure activities to every teacher in every building by the 2012-2013 academic year</p>	<p><del>ISS – ISS –</del>  The IMS houses the CCSS as well as all curricula that have been created and loaded by the district, any other district(s) in Rhode Island, or by the state.</p> <p><b>Interim Assessment System -</b>  The Interim Assessments system will provide assessment opportunities of CCSS materials in ELA and mathematics. This will help educators gain exposure to the content and assess where their students need further instruction on CCSS material.</p>
<p><del>(2)</del>  <b>(2) Utilization of a comprehensive data system used to inform daily instruction and school planning, including an</b></p>	<p><b>ISS –</b>  The ISS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contain the CCSS.</li> <li>• contain CCSS-aligned curricula (created by the district and/or a consortium of districts).</li> <li>• contain CCSS-aligned interim assessments (fixed-form/state generated, teacher-created from blueprint, and teacher-created from individual item bank).</li> <li>• house lesson plans connected to standards (local and/or statewide). Lesson plans are created by teachers and may contain instructional strategies, resources, links, multimedia, etc.</li> <li>• allow curricula (including all attached lesson plans) to be shared with the district or across districts</li> <li>• allow teachers to group students by a large variety of criteria, create instructional/intervention plans tailored to individual students' or groups of students' needs,</li> </ul>
<p><b>a. a-</b> Instructional Support System (ISS) that provides an array of CCSS-aligned assessment and instructional tools;</p>	
<p><b>b. b-</b> Curriculum and lesson planning development and sharing tools;</p>	
<p><b>c. e-</b> Student growth visualization tool that enables teachers to view and track student progress;</p>	

<p>d. <del>d</del>-Comprehensive classroom-based RTI tools that enable highly granular tracking of interventions and student response to intervention, including specialized modules for English Learners and students with disabilities; and</p>	<p>track student response to instruction/interventions, and share all of the above with each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contain an early warning system that will identify students who are at risk for dropping out of school based on several metrics triggering specific interventions .</li> </ul> <p><b>Formative assessment training modules –</b> These modules will:</p>
<p>e. Early warning system that identifies students manifesting early signs of dropout beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be available to all educators through the ISS.</li> <li>establish a common understanding of the purpose and components of the formative assessment process.</li> <li>deepen educators’ understanding of how to plan for, use, and analyze data generated by formative assessments.</li> <li>encourage collaboration among educators through a Community of Practice model.</li> </ul> <p><b>Data Use Professional Development –</b> Data Use PD will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training to district and school leaders on the use of data to drive instruction</li> <li>Be data-source neutral, allowing educators to reflect on a variety of data</li> <li>Be tiered to meet all participants at their current levels of data use</li> <li>Focus on providing schools with the infrastructure, culture, and knowledge for sustaining data use</li> <li>Build upon current <b>R#RTI</b> practices</li> <li>Build knowledge on analyzing data in aggregated and disaggregated forms to address the needs of subgroups (ELLs and SWDs)</li> </ul>

Focus schools may select: (1) school closure, (2) restart, or (3) the Flex **ModelApproaches**. Closure and restart **modelsapproaches** are identical for Focus and Priority schools.

Focus schools selecting the Flex **ModelApproach** face a similar set of options to those faced by Priority **schoolsSchools**. However, Focus **schoolsSchools** must select seven intervention strategies – compared to the nine required of Priority **schoolsSchools** – as part of their school reform plan. Focus schools implementing the Flex **ModelApproach** must select and implement no fewer than seven intervention strategies of their choice. The seven strategies include three (3) Tier I, or *core school improvement strategies*; two

(2) Tier II, or *intervention II strategies*, that provide important supplements to a comprehensive reform plan; and two (2) Tier III, or *intervention III strategies*.

LEAs and Focus Schools may propose one locally-created Intervention Strategy as one of the four total required under the Flex Approach. Locally-created strategies will be reviewed using the same criteria as Flex Menu strategies in addition to the following:

(1) Alignment to Seven Turnaround Principles

(2) Scope of expected impact

A locally-created Intervention Strategy may only qualify as an Intervention III Strategy if it will impact the whole school.

Since Waiver implementation, all ~~4311~~ identified Focus ~~schools~~Schools (including those now classified as Priority Schools) have selected the Flex ~~model~~Approach.

During the 2012 and 2013 academic years, RIDE identified a full set of Focus ~~schools~~Schools. During the period covered under this waiver extension – the 2014-~~2015~~15 school year, RIDE will suspend the practice of labeling new Focus ~~schools~~Schools on the basis of PARCC data. This suspension ~~of the Focus classification~~ is the result of extensive consultation with practitioners and stakeholders. During this consultation, ~~both formal and informal~~, there was agreement that it was both appropriate and reasonable to dedicate the ~~14~~2014-15 school year to a rigorous and transparent review of the emerging PARCC data, to develop a collective understanding of the results, and to use those results to resume labeling beyond the ~~14~~2014-15 school year. Schools already identified as Focus ~~schools~~Schools that have not successfully exited will remain so-classified. Schools eligible for exit based upon performance will retain their ability to do so.

Please see Table 11 for more information about the requirements of the Flex ~~Model~~Approach for Focus schools.

**Table 11: Flex Model Intervention Approach Strategy Options for Focus Schools**

<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>	<i>Content</i>
<b>Intervention III Strategies: Focus schools select two from areas of their choice</b>			
L-III.1: Removal of building principal and replacement with a leader with a experience and/or training in turnaround environments	S-III.1: Require at least 30 hours of focused professional development with a focus on instructional strategies to support students with disabilities and English Learners	I-III.1: Implement staff recommitment process to substantially different working conditions, including definition of school hours, job assignment, and job duties	C-III.1: Implement comprehensive improvement of instructional approaches for struggling students including focused professional development and a system for student progress monitoring
L-III.2: Restructure building leadership team to dramatically increase time available for instructional leadership	S-III.2: Hire building-level instructional specialists to support educators to serve English Learners, students with disabilities, and other students at risk for failure	I-III.2: Dramatically increase common planning time and implement a system for its effective utilization, both horizontally and vertically	C-III.2: Review student course-taking patterns and make substantial changes to school schedule and student placement to ensure access to rigorous academic core
L- III.3: Provide building administrators the authority and autonomy to hire, manage teacher placement, budget, and school schedule	S-III.3: Implement a system of peer support and assistance to support the needs of educators	I-III.3: Review and change student enrollment and placement processes to increase family engagement & improve student outcomes	C-III.3: Implement a culturally competent support system to improve safety, reduce suspensions, increase attendance, and support all students
<b>Intervention II Strategies: Focus Schools select two strategies from areas of their choice</b>			
L-II.1. Evaluate the principal and connect him or her with a mentor or appropriate resources to ensure ability to lead the school reform work	S- II.1: Implement a comprehensive drop-out prevention and reentry program	I-II.1: Complete an external audit of the use of school funds to guide staffing decisions and implement findings	C-II.1: Increase advanced coursework opportunities for students
L-II.2: Evaluate, assess, and diagnose the performance of the existing school leadership team and take appropriate job action	S-II.2: Implement a comprehensive ramp-up program for students at-risk of failure or subpopulations with the largest achievement gaps	I-II.2: Reallocate resources to increase support for direct instruction of students at risk for failure	C-II.2: Assign additional instructional coaches or other core content focused, job-embedded support for teachers
L-II.3: Contract with a vendor or partner with a track record of success to support the leadership team in school turnaround	S-II.3: Implement culturally competent family and community engagement program focused on instruction and academic performance	I-II.3: Develop and implement support systems for student transition into kindergarten and/or across break grades	C-II.3: Offer virtual education options for both at-risk and advanced students
L-II.4: Identify one leader to routinely monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the core curriculum/instruction and services to traditionally underserved students	S-II.4. Hire full time parent/community engagement specialist to implement family and community engagement that is systemic, sustained, and integrated with school improvement	I-II.4: Establish a comprehensive system to support struggling teachers with content and pedagogy, especially teachers of students with disabilities and English Learners	C-II.4: Implementation of instructional monitoring system to ensure that the curriculum is being fully implemented and traditionally underserved students have access to academic core
L-II.5: Assign family/community outreach to member of leadership team and hold him/her accountable	S-II.5: Establish flexible or expanded learning opportunities with a focus on students at risk for failure	I-II.5: Implement culturally competent tiered system of support focused on student psycho-social health	C-II.5: Increase student access to career, technical, or credentialing programs

## ***The Needs of English Learners and Students with Disabilities***

The intervention strategies included in the Flex Model Approach were crafted to place rigorous yet proven intervention requirements on districts and identified schools with extremely low levels of academic achievement and growth of students with disabilities and English Learners/learners. All LEAs with large and persistent achievement gaps selecting for students with disabilities and English learners that selected the Flex Model Approach will be required to select intervention strategies and craft a school reform plan that addresses the address these students' educational needs ~~of students with disabilities and English Learners~~. This requirement will take three forms.

First, the diagnostic screen has been intentionally developed to yield targeted information about the educational needs and performance of students with disabilities and English Learners/learners.

To that end, LEAs and identified schools will receive targeted information about EL performance, including:

- (1) • \_\_\_\_\_ Highly disaggregated state assessment results including item analysis and student growth percentiles for EL performance over time;
- (2) • \_\_\_\_\_ ACCESS scores and ELP achievement (whenever possible);
- (3) • \_\_\_\_\_ The performance of ELs in program and exited monitoring students,
- (4) • \_\_\_\_\_ The rates of student exit from program;
- (5) • \_\_\_\_\_ Disproportionality; and,
- (6) • \_\_\_\_\_ EL access to linguistically appropriate curriculum, rich in both academic content and language acquisition supports.

LEAs and identified schools will receive targeted information about the performance of students with disabilities including:

- (1) • \_\_\_\_\_ Disaggregated performance data from the state assessment;
- (2) • \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation and Dropout rates;
- (3) • \_\_\_\_\_ Participation and Performance on State Assessment;
- (4) • \_\_\_\_\_ Suspension & Expulsion Rates by Disability and Race;
- (5) • \_\_\_\_\_ FAPE, percent of children served in the regular education setting; and,
- (6) • \_\_\_\_\_ Disproportionality.

Second, LEAs serving identified schools will be required to select intervention strategies that are clearly responsive to the instructional needs of their disaggregated subpopulations. The Flex Model Approach was designed explicitly to focus on the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners/learners; over 60% of the 28 strategies specifically address the unique educational needs of these students. Table 12 below summarizes these intervention strategies.

**Table 12: Flex Model Intervention Approach Strategies that Support English Learners and Students with Disabilities**

<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>	<i>Content</i>
<b>Intervention III Strategies</b>			
	S-III.1: Require at least 30 hours of focused professional development with a focus on instructional strategies to support students with disabilities and English Learners		C-III.1: Implement comprehensive improvement of instructional approaches for struggling students including focused professional development and a system for student progress monitoring
	S-III.2: Hire building-level instructional specialists to support educators to serve English Learners, students with disabilities, and other students at risk for failure		
		I-III.3: Review and change student enrollment and placement processes to increase family engagement & improve student outcomes	C-III.3: Implement a culturally competent support system to improve safety, reduce suspensions, increase attendance, and support all students
<b>Intervention II Strategies</b>			
	S- II.1: Implement a comprehensive drop-out prevention and reentry program		
	S-II.2: Implement a comprehensive ramp-up program for students at-risk of failure or subpopulations with the largest achievement gaps	I-II.2: Reallocate resources to increase support for direct instruction of students at risk for failure	
	S-II.3: Implement culturally competent family and community engagement program focused on instruction and academic performance		C-II.3: Offer virtual education options for both at-risk and advanced students
L-II.4: Identify one leader to routinely monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the core curriculum/instruction and services to traditionally underserved students	S-II.4. Hire full time parent/community engagement specialist to implement family and community engagement that is systemic, sustained, and integrated with school improvement	I-II.4: Establish a comprehensive system to support struggling teachers with content and pedagogy teachers of students with disabilities and English Learners	C-II.4: Implement an instructional monitoring system to ensure that the curriculum is being fully implemented and traditionally underserved students have access to academic core
L-II.5: Assign family/community outreach to member of leadership team and hold him/her accountable	S-II.5: Establish flexible or expanded learning opportunities with a focus on students at risk for failure	I-II.5: Implement culturally competent tiered system of support focused on student psycho-social health	

Third, Focus ~~schools~~Schools will be subject to intensive progress monitoring throughout the term of their identification. This progress monitoring will include the performance of all student subpopulation including students with disabilities and English ~~Learners~~learners.

Finally, Focus ~~schools~~Schools will be required to implement a management system for response to intervention (RTI.) Through Race to the Top, RIDE is providing a comprehensive web-based system for RTI through a student information management system (ISS). This system will allow tracking of many types of student data and will have specific components dedicated to the needs of students with disabilities and English learners. ~~SIS). This system will allow tracking of many types of student data and will have specific components dedicated to the needs of students with disabilities and English learners.~~ The system ~~will be~~is being rolled out to schools in the 2014-15 school year.

### ***Focus School Timeline for Implementation***

~~The proposed intervention system ensures that all Focus schools will be in early implementation—actively implementing most elements of their selected intervention model—by the 2012-2013 school year. All focus schools will be in full implementation by the 2013-2014 school year.~~

~~RIDE will be formally identifying only one cohort of Focus schools under the life of this waiver application. However, during the waiver period, Focus schools may be accelerated into Priority status. In the course of the Waiver, this has occurred with 3 schools. Furthermore, three Warning schools fell into Focus status.[Additional information about the timeline for implementation can be found in Appendix C.]~~

### ***Stage One: Diagnosis and Intervention, and Early Implementation Timeline (Year 1)***

~~(1) Late Summer/Early Spring 2012Fall Year One: All new Focus ~~schools~~Schools identified and diagnostic screen administered.~~

~~(2) Late Spring 2012: AllFall Year One: LEAs for all newly-identified Focus ~~schools~~Schools select an intervention ~~model~~approach and submit for Commissioner Approval.~~

~~Summer 2012: All~~

~~(3) Winter Year One: LEAs and newly-identified Focus ~~schools~~Schools develop their school reform plan~~

~~(4) Summer 2012: RIDE approves school reform plans.~~

Spring Year One: Early implementation for all newly-identified Focus Schools

Close of Year 1:

First opportunity for a Focus school identified in Fall 2016 to achieve first of two years toward exit criteria and receive additional indicator of Rising.

### **Stage One Timeline Justification**

The Focus school timeline allows for the possibility of a school that shows such substantial improvement after Year One that it achieves a CIS equivalent to Good Standing to meet its first year of exit criteria. This is one year sooner than for Priority schools. The reasons for Focus School low performance may be specific to deficiencies in a particular student support or content area. As a result, the necessary interventions may be targeted in scope and possible for an LEA and school to implement quickly, without the need for an early implementation period. RIDE will therefore consider Year One results toward a Focus School's exit. Nevertheless, exit will require that the improvement endure for a second consecutive year.

### **Stage Two: Implementation and Progress Monitoring Timeline (Years 2 and 3)**

September 2012:

School Years 2 and 3:

- (1) All newly-identified Focus schools begin early Schools in full implementation of plan
- (2) School year 2012-2013: Early implementation with bi-annual. RIDE conducts quarterly progress monitoring.

June 2013: Year-end review

At the close of each school year, Focus Schools will have the opportunity to achieve the first of two consecutive school years toward exit and become Rising.

(3)

### **Stage Three: Implementation Through Exit Timeline (No later than Years 4-5)**

(1) September 2013: All Focus For rapidly improving schools fully implement model

(2) School only, Year 2013-2014: Full implementation with bi-annual quarterly progress monitoring

June 2014:

- (3) For rapidly improving schools only, Close of Year-end review
  - a. 2: First year that Focus schools are classified into "Schools that were Rising" and "Caution" status based upon performance may exit by meeting exit criteria for two consecutive years subsequent to identification.

Close of Year 3:

First year that a Focus school shall, based on progress toward exit criteria, either:

1. Exit
2. receive the additional indicator of Rising, or
3. receive the additional indicator of Caution.

Year 4 :

First possible year that a Focus school could exit through successful School receiving the additional indicator of Caution could experience additional state intervention,

including moving to Priority status, due to failure to implement and/or stagnant or falling performance

**Modified Timelines for Focus Schools Identified Prior to 2016**

b. As with Priority Schools, the timeline for the transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3 for Focus Schools is affected by the transition to PARCC. Depending on the year of their identification, the 11 schools identified as Focus under the waiver will have completed 2 or 3 years of full implementation at the close of the 2014-15 school year and growth (1/2 year of planning, 1 year of early 3 or 4 years of full implementation, and 1 full year of implementation) at the close of the 2015-16 school year (when the results of the second administration of PARCC are available.) The timeline for these schools is summarized alongside the timeline for schools that will be labeled Focus under this waiver in Table 13 below.

- ~~(4) School year 2014-2015: Full implementation with bi-annual monitoring~~
- ~~(5) June 2015: Year-end review~~

~~2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.~~

**Classification Differentiation Based Upon Performance**

~~Exit~~

**Table: 13 Implementation Timelines Comparison- Focus Schools**

	<u>SY 2014-15</u>	<u>SY 2015-16</u>	<u>SY 2016-17</u>	<u>SY 2017-18</u>	<u>SY 2018-19</u>	<u>SY 2019-2020</u>
<u>All Focus schools identified prior to SY 2013-14</u>	<u>Full Implementation, Year 2 or 3</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Continued Full Implementation</u></li> </ul>	<u>Full implementation, Year 3 or 4</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>
<u>Focus schools identified close of SY 2013-14</u>	<u>Year 1</u>  <u>Early Implementation</u>	<u>Year 2</u>  <u>Full Implementation</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Continued Full Implementation</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 3</u>  <u>Full Implementation</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Continued Full Implementation</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 4</u>  <u>Full Implementation</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 5</u>  <u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 6</u>  <u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u>  <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>

"Pause": No new Focus schools will be identified close of SY 2014-15

New Focus schools identified close of SY 2015-16	<u>Year 1</u> <u>Early Implementation</u> <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Continued Full Implementation</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 2</u> <u>Full Implementation</u> <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Continued Full Implementation</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 3</u> <u>Full Implementation</u> <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>	<u>Year 4</u> <u>Possible additional SEA intervention</u> <u>Close of Year Decision:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rising</u></li> <li>• <u>Exit</u></li> <li>• <u>Caution</u></li> </ul>
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During the waiver period, Focus Schools may be accelerated into Priority status. In these cases, Focus Schools will move to the Priority timeline at Stage 2 or 3 to appropriately reflect the number of years the school has already been implementing school reform interventions.

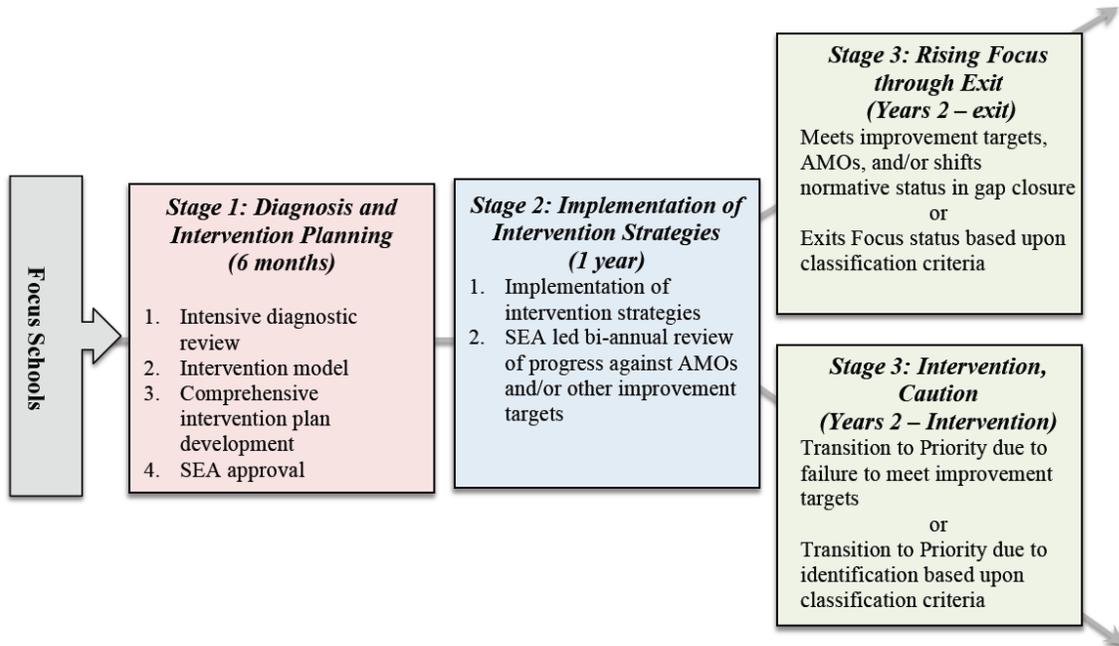
2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

### Classification Differentiation Based Upon Performance

~~from Rhode Island’s intervention system occurs in Stage 3 of an LEA’s implementation of a school intervention model, which covers years two through five (school years 13-14, 14-15, and beyond for Cohort III.) The system is designed to be rigorous, exiting schools only upon sustained improved performance and in no case earlier than the 2014-2015 school year for Priority nor earlier than 2013-14 school year for Focus. However, the design also recognizes that mid-term judgments about performance are important tools in differentiating schools that are ambitiously, rigorously and successfully implementing their intervention plan from those that are failing to implement a model and/or reach performance targets.~~

Beginning in 2013-2014 school year, Focus schools in Stage 3 will be classified into one of two categories: “Focus-Rising-Focus” and “Focus-Caution.” This differentiation will be made on the basis of the school performance against the ~~targets set forth in their approved plan (Stage 1 in Figure 7 below.)~~ exit criteria. Focus schools that, ~~over subsequent to identification, earn a CIS score in the course range that is equivalent to a classification of the first year of planning and implementation have met 80% or more of performance targets or 80% of AMOs~~ Good Standing will be classified as “labeled “Focus-Rising-Focus,”” indicating that the implementation of their reform agenda is on-track and that they are moving toward exit.

**Figure 7: Exit from Focus Status**



Alternatively, schools for which RIDE has three years of student outcome data subsequent to identification that have failed in that time to reach/achieve a CIS score in the 80% AMO threshold or fail to show progress towards their improvement targets Good Standing range will be classified as labeled “Focus, –Caution.” Focus- Caution indicates that the reform agenda is falling off-track. Focus schools that are classified and persist for more than two years as “Focus, Caution” schools will be advanced into Priority status and that, without improvement, the school will be at risk for more intensive state intervention as authorized under Rhode Island General Law.

The differentiation of Focus Schools based upon mid-term performance is intended to provide LEAs and schools with early indications of their progress against the performance commitments set forth in their reform plan. In addition, it creates incentives for ambitious, urgent, and sustained implementation of the school reform plan during the first 24 months of implementation, a period that national research has found to be central to successful, durable improvement.

~~The differentiation of Focus schools based upon mid-term performance is intended to provide LEAs and schools with early indications of their progress, create incentives for and reward ambitious reform, and establish clear consequences for failure to aggressively implement the approved school reform plan.~~

### **Exit Criteria**

~~Focus schools may not exit classification status~~ Focus Schools will be held to 2 years of implementation before the end of the 2013-2014 year, holding schools to one year of early implementation and one full year of full model implementation. They are eligible

for exit. This period of classification ensures that all schools eligible for exit have provided adequate evidence of *sustained, durable, and significant improvement*.

Eligibility for exit requires ~~schools to meet one of the two following requirements:~~

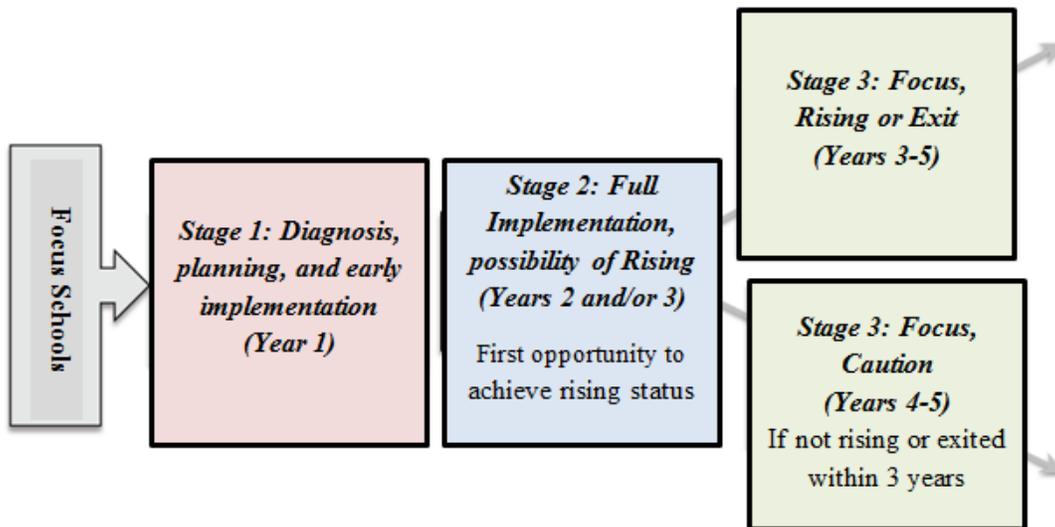
~~(1) The school must have reached at least 80% of their performance targets annually for the first Focus Schools to achieve a two-years of implementation; and~~

~~The schools must reach 80% of their AMOs—including all missed targets contributing to their original Focus status—for one year;~~

~~or~~

~~(2) A substantial-year long shift in rank ordering based upon composite index score such that their CIS ranking moves them into “typical” status the Good Standing category for the two most recent consecutive years. Schools must meet the 95% test participation expectation for both years and in both content areas (English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics) in order to meet these exit criteria.~~

### **Figure 5: Exit from Focus Status**



## **2.F Provide Incentives and Supports for other Title I Schools**

2.F Describe how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how

these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

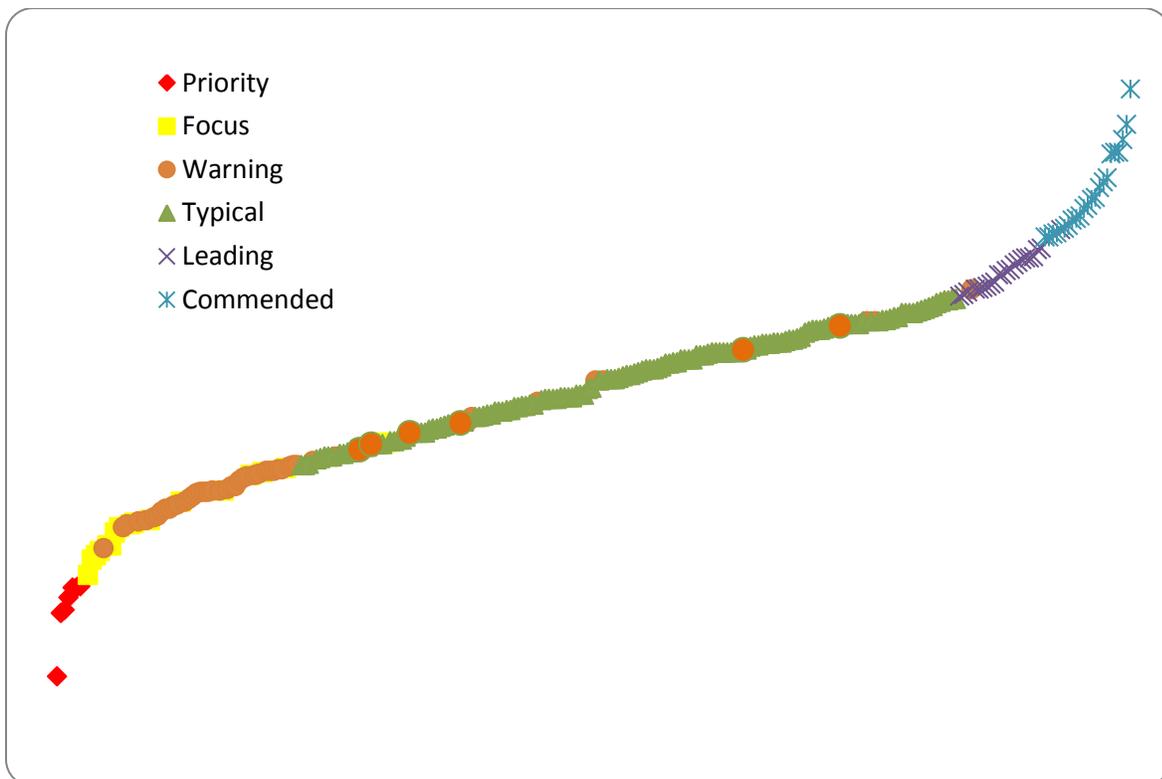
## The State System of Support for Low-Performing Districts and Schools

### Classification of Low-Performing Schools

Rhode Island has developed a classification system that breaks all Rhode Island schools into six levels. These levels utilize criteria to classify schools into meaningful groups based upon their performance. Beyond mere classification, this approach is designed to enable meaningful support and intervention in low performing schools beyond those in Priority or Focus status.

~~Figure 8 below presents the distribution of schools across each of Rhode Island's six levels of performance according to their Composite Index Score, (CIS), as well as four "catch all" rules for achievement gaps, low growth, low graduation rates, or failure to achieve 95% participation in state testing.~~

### ~~Figure 8: Classification of Rhode Island Schools by Composite Index Score~~



## **Warning Schools**

### **Schools in Good Standing with Alerts**

RIDE will identify and classify ~~45 schools as Warning Schools. Warning schools that, based on the Composite Index Score, are at risk for overall low achievement, low growth, large achievement gaps, or low graduation rates. Alerts are assigned when one or more of the following conditions are true:~~

- ~~• Schools that have participation rates below 95%; or~~
- ~~• Schools that do not meet any AMO for three consecutive years; or~~
- ~~• Schools whose graduation rate is less than 70%.~~

~~The Alerts replace the Warning status that existed under our previous waiver. Over the past several years, we discovered volatility in Warning status due to fluctuations in the size of their subgroups as well as the LEAs' and schools' efforts to make targeted, high impact adjustments to improve specific programs. The Warning label was effective in drawing both educators' and the public's attention to weaknesses in schools' programs because our system of interventions is set up for more intensive and longer term change in schools, the proposed system stabilizes the classification system. We are therefore describing the performance of these schools will be so classified if more accurately by specifying that they have remain in Good Standing but have an Alert in a Composite Index Score (CIS) between 38.50 and less than 50. It will also include any school that meets one or more of the six following conditions: specific area. At the same time, RIDE will shift its approach to working with these schools to be more specific to the reasons for the Alert.~~

- ~~1. An Absolute Proficiency Metric of 9 or less; or~~
- ~~2. A Gap Score Metric of less than 15; or~~
- ~~3. A Growth Score Metric of 7.5 or less; or~~
- ~~4. A combined Graduation and High School Scaled Score Change of 10 or less; or~~
- ~~5. Any school that did not test 95% of their students in either reading or mathematics~~
- ~~6. Missing the same AMO for three consecutive years.~~

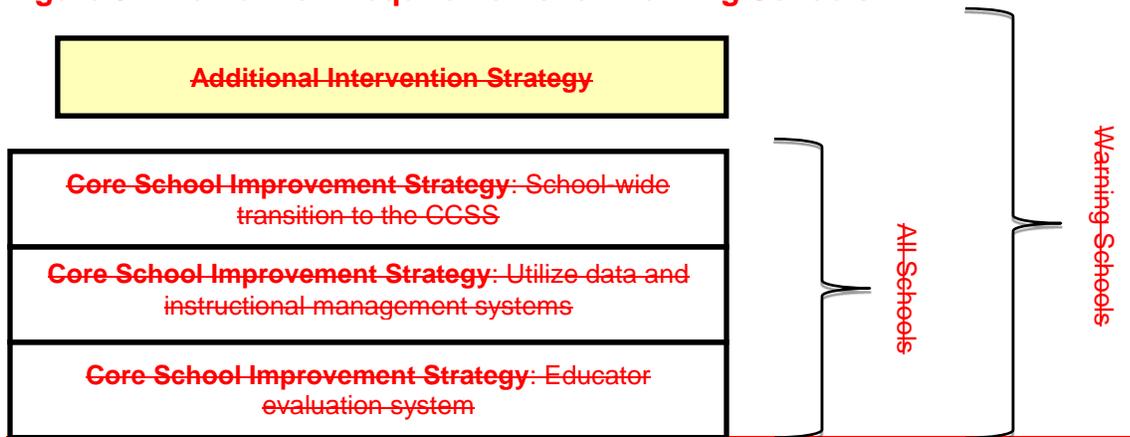
~~The combined powers of the utilization of the CIS plus the additional criteria enable RIDE to accurately identify schools that have either *widespread* low levels of performance and growth and large achievement gaps or *isolated but serious* problems in the areas of overall achievement, low growth, or low graduation rates.~~

### **Identification and Intervention in Warning Schools**

~~RIDE will intervene in Warning schools through a combination of a mandatory school-level diagnostic screen and the requirement that each warning school implement a limited-scale improvement plan. Warning schools~~ **support for Schools in Good Standing with Alerts**

~~Schools with Alerts will not be required to select a fullan intervention modelapproach, but rather will be required to implement the three core school improvement strategies and one additional implement intervention strategystrategies of their choice. that directly relate to the reasons for the Alert.~~ Schools may choose from the strategies included in the Flex ~~Model or Menu~~, may identify another empirically-proven strategy of equal intensity. ~~Please see Figure 9for a model of the intervention requirement for Warning schools, or may develop another response to the reason for the Alert. For example, a district whose school receives an Alert due to fewer than 95% of students participating in the state assessment may need to put in place a communication plan for improving families' understanding of the assessment system.~~

**Figure 9: Intervention Requirements for Warning Schools**



~~As with Focus and Priority schools, RIDE will require that the intervention strategy selected by the Warning schools is responsive to the results of their diagnostic screen and focuses on their areas of most acute need. In the event that schools are identified as Warning schools on the basis of their graduation rates, they will be required to implement an intervention strategy targeted at reduction of drop out and improvement of graduation rate. In the event that they are identified on the basis of continuously missing one or more AMOs for three consecutive years, the school will be required to implement an interventions strategy or strategies keyed to the missed target(s).~~

~~For the 2012-13 school year, 29 Title I schools were identified as Warning schools. These 29 schools were located in 12 different districts. Five of the 12 districts include identified Priority and Focus schools being monitored by RIDE's Office of Transformation.~~

~~Based upon the findings of the Part B monitoring visit, RIDE will expand monitoring efforts with warning schools. Title I Schools identified as Warning schools for the 2012-13 school year completed the RIDE Diagnostic Screen Process. Based on the results~~

~~of that process, each Warning school developed a limited scope school reform plan (SRP) for RIDE approval.~~

In the annual submission of the district Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP), all districts with ~~warning~~ schools ~~were~~with Alerts will be asked to describe the school improvement intervention(s) to be implemented to ~~support~~address the ~~SRP~~reasons for ~~each warning school~~the Alerts. RIDE staff ~~conducted~~will conduct a desktop review of the CRP to ensure that the proposed intervention ~~was~~is of sufficient size, scope and quality to positively impact student achievement and address the schools' areas of need; and that federal resources in the CRP (Title I, II, III, and IDEA) ~~were~~are coordinated to support school improvement interventions.

~~Desktop monitoring of subsequent state assessments indicates that:~~

- ~~• 10 of the 29 warning schools improved and cleared Warning status~~
- ~~• 4 of the 29 showed decreased performances and moved to Focus status~~
- ~~• 1 school closed due to district consolidation of schools~~
- ~~• 14 of the 29 schools showed no change~~

### **Support for All Low Performing Schools**

~~The Rhode Island Department of Education operates the Academy of Transformative Leadership (ATL), a Race to the Top funded project designed to create a comprehensive, empirically-proven service center for all low-performing and struggling schools throughout Rhode Island. The ATL is run from within RIDE's Office of School Transformation and Innovation. The ATL RIDE's Office of School Transformation coordinates supports for all low-performing Title I schools identified under the accountability and classification described in this waiver renewal application. The Office of Transformation delivers services through a combination of staff support, core state and regional partnerships, and a rich array of vendors under contract by RIDE.~~

~~The ATL offers a wide array of services to all Rhode Island schools, but focuses on low-performing Title I schools that will be identified under the accountability and classification described in this waiver application.~~

The key support services ~~delivered through the ATL~~ include:

- ~~1. The turnaround leaders program, which creates a pipeline of highly trained school leaders prepared to work in turnaround environments;~~
- ~~2.1. The Summer Online Professional Development Institute, which provided 2 weeks of rigorous training to five-person teams from struggling schools; Materials on key topics related to school turnaround, including:
  - ~~a. Additional Professional Development Modules, which offer targeted professional Transformative leadership and school leadership team development~~
  - ~~b. Formative assessment~~
  - ~~c. Data Use~~~~

~~3. Statewide Network of various lengths and School Supports, which provides information on various topics;~~

~~4.2. The State and Regional Partnership Hub, which connects schools to key community-based organizations, that can support school improvement strategies;~~

~~5.3. Technical Assistance for LEAs Supporting for Students with Disabilities and English Learners through a core partnership with the New England Regional Education Laboratory;~~

~~6. Management of an Approved Provider List, which connects LEAs to vendors that have been pre-approved by RIDE based upon their track record of success in supporting schools and districts through turnaround; and~~

~~4. State Personnel Development Grant for intensive capacity-building around Multi-Tiered Systems of Support;~~

~~7.5. Diagnostic Screening Services, which makes the diagnostic screen used for Focus and Priority schools available to any struggling school in Rhode Island; and~~

~~6. See the summaries below Online resources for school reform planning and related face-to-face technical assistance from Office of Transformation staff.~~

RIDE's Office of Transformation coordinates these supports for Priority and Focus Schools through regular meetings with district leadership and quarterly monitoring meetings that involve school and district leadership. In addition, any LEAs with schools with Alerts will be informed of these resources upon notification of the Alert. These LEAs will be provided with an Office of Transformation contact person who can provide more information about, guidance on which resources may address the support system delivered through the ATL schools' needs, coordinate access.

<b>Support One: Turnaround Leaders Program</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>
Train turnaround leaders for service in PLA and Priority Schools	PLA schools, cohorts 1 and 2	Race to the Top
Provide job-embedded coaching for leaders trained in Turnaround Leaders Program	Priority Schools Focus Schools	Local Funds Federal Funds
Provide state-approved alternative pathway to administrative certification		
<b>Support Two: Summer Institute</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>

2 weeks of intensive summer training for leadership teams from PLA, Priority, and Focus schools	PLA schools, cohorts 1 and 2 Priority Schools Focus Schools	Race to the Top  Other Federal Funds
<b>Support Three: Professional Development Modules</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>
Providing LEAs and schools with professional developments of modules to build school leadership team capacity  Modules range from 3 day training sessions to 20 minute virtual tutorials	All Title I schools	Race to the Top
<b>Support Four: State and Regional Partnership Hub</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>
RIDE managed partnership hub to connect schools to relevant community-based, higher education, and technical assistance partners  Statewide system of support required under Title I	All Title I schools	Title I
<b>Support Five: Technical Assistance for LEAs Supporting for Students with Disabilities and English Learners</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>
Technical assistance, professional development, networking, research, and best-practice guidance to support ELs and students with disabilities.	All Title I schools	No cost: Regional Education Laboratory
<b>Support Six: Approved External Provider List</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>
RIDE managed list of approved external providers with track record of success in serving low-performing schools and closing achievement gaps	All schools	N/A
<b>Support Seven : Diagnostic Screening Services</b>		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Clients</i>	<i>Resourcing</i>
RIDE administered diagnostic screen designed to yield criterion-based and normative information about district and school performance	All Title I schools	State Funds

## 2.G Build Capacity to Improve Student Learning

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

- ~~iv.~~ timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
- ~~iv.~~ ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
- ~~vi.~~ holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

RIDE is focusing on capacity building at the LEA and SEA through ~~six~~ five strategies ~~that cover capacity building, progress monitoring of reform initiatives, quality assurance and accountability, the role of external partners, resource investment, and reduction of administrative and paperwork burdens.~~

### **Strategy One: Building SEA and LEA Capacity through Clarity of Roles**

Over the past ~~two~~ five years, RIDE has been striving to narrow and clarify the role of the agency relative to districts and schools. These efforts have taken two forms. First, the Basic Education Program sets forth four functions for the Rhode Island Department of Education in relationship to all school districts. These functions confine the role of the SEA only to duties that are either the *exclusive purview* of a state agency (such as policy development and promulgation, regulation and monitoring, and federal fund management) or to duties that are *most effectively or efficiently* delivered by a state agency (such as construction of statewide systems, addressing statewide barriers to reform, and connecting LEAs to state-level partners and resources.)

Within the context of the intervention system described in this application, RIDE will maintain a focus on these four functions through a set of service commitments made **by** RIDE's **to** LEAs and the identified schools they serve. These SEA commitments, which have already been formally adopted by the Commissioner and publicly distributed to affected LEAs, focus on:

- Differentiated SEA support for the lowest-performing districts and the schools they serve;
- Reduction of administrative burden, minimize or remove bureaucratic barriers, and reduce paperwork requirements;
- Setting clear performance expectations and establishing monitoring, accountability, and performance management systems that track LEA and school performance; and,
  -
- Ensuring adequacy of resources and prudent, allowable, and appropriate investment of resources in Rhode Island's lowest performing schools.

~~[See Appendix D for a copy of RIDE's commitment to Priority and Focus districts and the schools they serve.]~~

### **Strategy Two: Comprehensive Monitoring System for LEAs and Identified Schools**

~~Over the past ten years~~Prior to our initial waiver, RIDE ~~has~~ monitored school and district improvement initiatives through a system that ~~has~~ relied primarily upon LEA self-reporting of implementation successes and challenges. This self-reporting system ~~has been~~was punctuated with annual reporting of key student outcome measures, primary state assessment results, graduation rates, and other similarly aggregate metrics. Although these measures are crucial in monitoring the *overall* effects of comprehensive reform initiatives, they do not provide equally important short-cycle, leading indicators that enable early stage judgment about the effectiveness of both intervention selection and execution.

Under ~~the proposed intervention system described in this~~ approved 2012 waiver application, RIDE's, RIDE implemented a new approach to progress monitoring ~~will be~~that is comprehensive, regular, and appropriate to the developmental stage of the reform initiative. ~~To that end,~~ RIDE ~~will~~has:

- (1) ~~Assign~~Worked with LEAs to assign each intervention strategy at each school both leading and outcome measures that ~~will~~ enable targeted performance monitoring from early implementation to school exit that is aligned to the school's individual context and method of implementation;
- (2) Dedicate substantial SEA resources to *early and mid-stage* progress monitoring of leading and outcomes measures, with a gradual release of performing monitoring in years 3-5 for Priority ~~schools~~Schools that are consistently meeting performance targets; and,

(3) Differentiate school classification status beginning as early as Year 2 for Focus schools and Year 3 for Priority ~~schools, allowing for:~~ Schools.

- ~~a. Focus and Priority schools to be recognizing as “Rising” due to consistently reaching improvement targets, or~~
- ~~b. Focus and Priority schools to be recognizing as “Caution” due to failure to implement the intervention model and/or failure to reach performance targets.~~

Using this more granular approach to progress monitoring with a heavy emphasis on early and mid-stage implementation, RIDE will ensure successful LEA implementation of intervention models approach and improved student outcomes.

### ***Strategy Three: Alignment of Diagnostic, Intervention, and Progress Monitoring Efforts into Four Areas that Build LEA Capacity***

Although in the past RIDE ~~has~~ routinely required a comprehensive needs assessment processes before awarding state and federal grant funding to LEAs, these needs assessments ~~have~~ were usually ~~been~~ LEA-designed and LEA-administered. Under Since the establishment of the new intervention system, RIDE ~~will be taking~~ has taken full responsibility for a foundational, comprehensive diagnostic screening process for Priority and Focus ~~schools~~ Schools. This diagnostic screening process ~~will provide~~ provides:

- ~~(1)~~ 1. The SEA, LEA, and identified school with a comprehensive criterion-based and normative view of their performance;
- ~~(2)~~ 2. A diverse and broad concrete baseline against which to both measure school progress; and
- ~~(3)~~ 3. A basis upon which the SEA can make data-informed judgments about the scope, breadth, intensity and nature of the interventions LEAs select for Priority schools.

~~Under development for the last three years, this diagnostic screen is derived from the Basic Education Program, state education regulations promulgated in 2009 that classify all LEA responsibilities into 28 critical performance measures. [See Appendix B for a one-page overview of the 28 performance measures.] In addition, as a Race to the Top winner, RIDE has completed the first stage of construction of a comprehensive, statewide data system that draws a diverse, highly granular array of data from LEAs. This LEA-generated data, coupled with the data already collected for performance monitoring and federal reporting, will enable RIDE to enhance the depth, breadth, and accuracy of the diagnostic screen and efficiently implement the process for all identified schools.~~

The results of this diagnostic screen will yield information in 28 areas, each of which is classified into four LEA Capacities: (1) Leadership, (2) Content and Instruction, (3) Infrastructure, and (4) Personnel Supports. These four LEA capacities are well known and understood throughout Rhode Island LEAs. Therefore, the four LEA capacities serve as the organizing structure for the diagnostic screen, intervention strategies, and RIDE's performance monitoring system. See Table 13 below for more information about the use of the four capacities in intervention strategy performance management.

**Table 13: The Role of the LEA Capacities in Performance Management**

<b>Diagnostic Screen Results</b>	<b>Intervention Strategy Selection</b>	<b>Monitoring System Performance Indicators</b>
Overall <b>Leadership</b> Capacity	<b>Leadership</b> Interventions	<b>Leadership</b> Performance Indicators
Overall Capacity of <b>Personnel Supports</b>	<b>Personnel Supports</b> Interventions	<b>Personnel</b> Performance and Support Indicators
Overall Capacity of LEA <b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>LEA Infrastructure</b> Interventions	<b>Infrastructure</b> Indicators
Overall Capacity of <b>Content and Instruction</b>	<b>Content and Instruction</b> Interventions	Quality of Academic <b>Content and Instructional</b> Indicators

**Strategy Four: Rigorous Process for External Partners**

Through state regulation, RIDE is responsible for establishing a rigorous review process for external providers that result in a list of stated approved providers. These providers may provide services that include: (1) technical assistance for LEAs and schools; (2) external management organizations; (3) charter management organizations; and (4) direct service providers.

RIDE's external provider review process is staffed by both program and fiscal specialists and includes the following criteria:

1. Does the provider have a history of providing effective services in turnaround environments?
2. Does the provider demonstrate an understanding of the local context and do they have relevant experience in similar environments?
3. Can the provider document fiduciary health and evidence of their ability to increase the scale of the services at the level and pace proposed?
4. Does the provider utilize empirically proven practices?
5. Is the provider committed to *sustainable, scalable* services that are intentionally designed to build LEA capacity (when applicable)?
6. Are the proposed costs allowable, reasonable, prudent, and based on a transparent basis?

**Strategy Five** Under this renewal application, we propose the addition of powerful new capacity made possible through Rhode Island's *Instructional Support System*. Using this new system to deliver the diagnostic screen will allow educators to drill down into each metric of the school's Composite Index Score to support further analyses and diagnostic

strategies. This tool is being added at the request of our Educator Evaluation Advisory Group as part of their desire to more deeply understand their accountability data. In the diagnostic phase, it will allow LEA and school leaders to better understand current performance, determine which strategies will have the greatest impact for the particular students or groups of students who are struggling, and set precise annual targets that will allow them to assess the effectiveness of their interventions and whether they are on track to meet exit criteria.

***Strategy Four: Focused, Coordinated and Wise Investment of Federal, State, and Local Resources***

RIDE will focus on supporting LEAs in resourcing all intervention efforts in close collaboration with LEAs. Through this collaboration, RIDE will ensure that local, state, and federal resources are planned and invested to ensure sufficient support for implementation in priority schools of meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. This collaboration will focus on four areas.

*Area One: Cost Coverage*

In the area of “Cost Coverage” RIDE provides support to LEAs to ensure that resourcing plans include all necessary expenditure categories and are of sufficient size and scope to support the full implementation of all of the selected interventions over a period of no less than three years

*Area Two: Spending Alignment*

In the area of “Spending Alignment” RIDE provides support to LEAs to ensure that proposed expenditures are clearly detailed and aligned to the proposed intervention(s) in both amount of funds allocated for specific activities and timing of spending. RIDE will exercise applicable authority to ensure that there are no extraneous expenditures and the budget will support the interventions outlined in the application and School Reform Plan.

*Area Three: Reasonableness*

In the area of “Reasonableness” RIDE will support LEAs to ensure that budget expenditures appear reasonable, are clearly justified, necessary, and allowable to support the implementation of the intervention ~~model~~approach.

*Area Four: Integration and Sustainability*

In the area of “Integration and Sustainability” RIDE will support LEAs to ensure a strategic use and alignment of resources; specifically, RIDE staff will identify sources and amounts (either new or repurposed) of local and federal funds that will complement designated grant funds to support timely implementation of the intervention. This will include close collaboration with LEAs serving Focus and Priority schools to plan and manage all funds covered under ESEA, ensuring that the flexibilities afforded under the waiver are maximized to support the needs of low-performing schools.

### **Strategy ~~Six~~Five: Reduction of Administrative Burden**

RIDE has already begun to implement an agency-wide plan to reduce administrative and paperwork burdens on districts and schools, shift the SEA/LEA relationship *away from* compliance and toward active use of data and performance monitoring. To that end, RIDE is deeply engaged in the following work.

#### **Streamline data reporting requirements for LEAs; Provide state-level data analysis tools.**

RIDE is in the process of comprehensively rebuilding all state education data systems. As part of this effort, RIDE has consolidated data reports where possible, reduced redundancies in data collections, and integrated data systems into a more user accessible data communication system.

RIDE is currently implementing an enterprise data system to reduce burdens to the schools and districts in data collections and to facilitate the use of collected data to improve instruction and student learning. The agency's data system includes a data warehouse and a suite of decision support systems that store and provide access to individual student and teacher level data. Additionally, these systems include data verification and error-checking routines and a system for ensuring assignment of unique identifiers to individual students, which is a critical component in maintaining individual level longitudinal data.

We continue to expand the use of easy to use Web-based data applications with a built-in Automated Data Transfer agent (ADT) for timely and quality collection and reporting. We have provided services and trainings to hundreds of State and district administrators, data and IT managers, program coordinators and data clerks. We continue our ongoing process of eliminating redundant data collections, including thousands of duplicate records in enrollments, student membership and program eligibility.

RIDE recently developed a Web-based meta-data repository system to further reduce burdens on schools and districts and to provide a consistent and reliable means of access to data. State and local users may query this online system for data elements and embedded code-sets by keyword, entity, domain and data event names, and by program areas and data owners. Users may use the built-in tools to build record layout sheets and data submission templates. Analysts, data administrators and developers can apply the meta-data in system integration, data validations and in creation of enterprise data management and reporting systems.

~~Current burden reduction projects include the development of a single sign-on system, electronic sign-off of all submitted and an automated appeal process to enable districts to submit requests for post-collection data updates. Work is also under way to fully integrate the collection of Title I students (including homeless students) and students enrolled in Career and Technical education.~~

#### **Improve the Efficiency of Federal Program Management**

Beginning in the 2010-2011 year, RIDE began a two-phase burden reduction program focused on federal program fund management. During Phase I, the Consolidated Resource Plan application was audited and revised to ensure that it adequately covered all federally required fields while, at the same time, minimized the amount of time required by LEAs. Through this audit, RIDE was able to consolidate nearly 25% of the content by elimination of duplication and consolidation of fields.

During Phase II of the burden reduction efforts, RIDE ~~is working~~worked with technical experts to audit all federal program performance review processes and migrate toward a unified approach to on-site monitoring. This unified visit approach is designed to consolidate components of federal program monitoring in order to:

- (1) Create improved coordination across federal programs at the LEA level;
- (2) Examine data in light of federal program investments and results;
- (3) Reduce the time required for LEAs to report compliance matters including desk audit/reporting time and on-site monitoring time; ~~and~~
- (4) Focus intensive RIDE monitoring activity on “high risk” districts or compliance elements.

~~RIDE will conduct analysis throughout the implementation of the flexibility to identify areas for consolidation, improving efficiency and reducing burden. RIDE will revisit policies and procedures regularly to identify potential burdens. RIDE conducted an analysis of the federal program funding application in 2011, which RIDE efforts to reduce burden have to-date~~ resulted in a reduced paperwork burden to LEAs by 15% for Title I, 15% for Title III and 20% for IDEA funding applications. RIDE ~~plans to will~~ continue to run similar analysis throughout the flexibility period.

## Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

### 3.A *Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Evaluation and Support Systems*

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the SEA’s plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year;</li> </ol>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of</li> </ol>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and</li> <li>iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).</li> </ul>	<p>evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and</li> <li>iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.</li> </ul>
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### **Educator Effectiveness and the Rhode Island Theory of Action**

Research has proven that there is nothing more fundamental to student success than having the benefit of an excellent teacher who works in a school led by an excellent principal. We believe our most essential function as an SEA is improving and assuring the quality of education for students through our commitment to recruiting, developing, supporting, and retaining highly effective principals and teachers in our schools.

Therefore, the first priority in our strategic plan, *Transforming Education in Rhode Island*, is to ensure that we have excellent educators in every school in our state. To do their work effectively, teachers need the support of world-class standards, such as the Common Core State Standards, and they need to work within systems of accountability and support that: set appropriate annual objectives; diagnostically recognize problems at the school and district level; and provide a model and timeframe for school transformation that will accelerate all schools toward greatness. Teachers and school leaders who work within such a system are well prepared for a fair and transparent evaluation system that will provide guidance toward improving instruction and that will guide school districts in making appropriate personnel decisions that advance teaching and learning. Rhode Island is currently in the process of designing the next strategic plan that will create a roadmap through 2020. We are taking a community-based approach in identifying the priority areas, but will continue to support educator effectiveness through the work of educator evaluation and other initiatives.

### **Adopting Standards for Educator Evaluation**

[The Rhode Island Basic Education Program](#), which the R.I. Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (Board of Regents) approved on June 4, 2009, states that:

Appraising personnel performance and quality is an extremely important factor affecting student learning. The LEA shall establish a set of clearly detailed and widely disseminated policies and procedures for the supervision and evaluation of all staff. These policies and procedures shall include personnel policy statements, job descriptions that outline job functions and responsibilities, and assignment and discipline of all LEA staff.

In order to ensure that all staff show consistent positive impact on student learning, the LEA shall have a formal evaluation process that is completed on a regular basis and is compliant with applicable legal requirements. The evaluation system promotes the growth and effectiveness of staff, provides feedback for continuous improvement, and includes processes for disciplinary action and exiting of ineffective staff. The evaluation system shall be developed, implemented and managed by persons with the necessary qualifications, skills, and training. The evaluation system shall be described in sufficient detail so that it is clear who is responsible and what is expected. (G-15-2.2-4)

While the BEP regulations were still in draft form, RIDE spent 18 months developing *Rhode Island Education Evaluation System Standards (RI Educator Evaluation Standards)*. These *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* were created through a transparent, inclusive process. The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) met with teacher and principal teams including union representatives, held community forums with the Rhode Island Urban Education Task Force, and integrated feedback from the LEAs' annual teacher and principal surveys. Following the initial draft of the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, we solicited public comment over three months and held two public hearings.

The Board of Regents approved the Rhode Island Standards for Educator Evaluation (*RI Educator Evaluation Standards*) on December 3, 2009, as described in the official minutes of the meeting:

*Approval of Educator Evaluation Standards*

Next, the Commissioner presented the Educator Evaluation Standards for approval. She reminded the Board that the evaluation standards are exactly that – standards - and that their use should be considered similar to the manner in which the Program Approval Standards are used to gauge the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. The Board discussed at length all of the suggested changes at the November 19th work session. The Department will develop timelines and guidance documents, including rubrics and model processes, at the agency level, as needed to ensure the timely adherence of district practice to these standards. The group discussed in detail Standard 1.3 – “This standard established four broad areas of performance that should provide the focus for all educator evaluation. Testimony and research all support the need to place student improvement as the primary measure of effectiveness.” A sentence added to standard 1.3: “An educator’s overall evaluation of effectiveness is primarily determined by evidence of impact on student growth.” Regents expressed their concern about the wording of the added sentence. The discussion involved the use of “student growth” versus student achievement.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Amendment to Standard 1.3 of the Board of

Regents document, “Annotated Changes to RI Educator Evaluation System Standards” to read as follows: “An educator’s overall evaluation of effectiveness is primarily determined by evidence of impact on student growth and academic achievement.”

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adopts the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards, as amended.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

### [Educator Evaluation System Standards](#)

#### **Improving Teaching and Learning through Evaluation Systems**

Coupled with the BEP, the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* provide the framework that serves as the basis for all state and local human-resource management decisions — including certification, selection, tenure, professional development, support for both individual and groups of educators, placement, compensation, promotion, and retention. Every decision made in regard to the professional educators in Rhode Island, whether by an LEA or the SEA, will be based on evidence of the respective teacher’s or principal’s impact on student growth and academic achievement in addition to other measures of professional practice and professional responsibility. Through our Race to the Top application, we have also committed to the principle that no child in Rhode Island will be taught by a teacher who has been rated ineffective for two consecutive years.

The *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* require every LEA to establish an evaluation system that meets state standards by the (2011-12) school year. The 2011-2012 school year was a full year of gradual implementation for all LEAs. 2012-2013 was the first year of full implementation of teacher and principal evaluation. Rhode Island LEAs are currently implementing new evaluation systems for certified support professionals. ~~In June 2014 Rhode Island passed legislation, H 7096 Sub B, on educator evaluation that introduced limitations to the frequency with which any tenured teacher may be evaluated. The legislation calls for a cyclical process for those tenured teachers who are Highly Effective or Effective.~~ The evaluation of teachers, principals, and support professionals remains an LEA responsibility, and now it is done at a breadth and level of rigorous quality prescribed by state regulation.

Approved educator-evaluation systems in Rhode Island must align with the [Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards](#), [the Rhode Island Educator Code of Professional Responsibility](#), and the [Standards for Educational Leadership in Rhode Island \(Leadership Standards\)](#).

Additionally, the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* require LEAs to establish and support local District Evaluation Committees that include teachers, support professionals, administrators, and union representatives. This Committee in each LEA is charged with soliciting feedback from other educators, students, parents, and assessment experts, and it shares its findings with the LEA leadership.

To meet the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, each LEA's evaluation system must:

- base evaluation of educator effectiveness “*primarily on evidence of impact on **student growth and academic achievement**;*”
- differentiate educators into **four levels** of effectiveness (highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective);
- **annually evaluate effectiveness** of all educators, including teachers, principals, and professional support staff;
- ensure a **transparent, fair evaluation process**;
- involve **teachers and principals in the development process**; and
- provide opportunities for **professional growth and improvement**.

As part of our Race to the Top commitment, RIDE used these six standards as a foundation and worked with educators from across the state to design the Rhode Island Model educator-evaluation system.

## Developing Standards and Systems for Educator Evaluation

### ***Engagement of teachers, principals***

As we developed the model statewide evaluation system – **The Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System** - with the common definitions and methodologies and to assist with the resolution of evaluation-related concerns, RIDE established the Rhode Island Advisory Committee for Educator Evaluation Systems (ACEES). This committee iswas made up of 25 members: The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education; Commissioner of Higher Education (or designee); one representative from each of the state's teacher unions (Rhode Island Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals and the National Education Association – Rhode Island); one superintendent; one school committee representative; principals and teachers representing elementary, middle, and high schools; teachers of students with disabilities and of English Learners; professional support educators; one secondary student; one parent; and one representative from the business community. Members of this committee arewere nominated for a two-year period. The Commissioner sought nominations from professional organizations, as appropriate, to make all appointments.

ACEES worksworked to ensure that all members of the education community arewere deeply engaged in the development and implementation of the Rhode Island Model for educator evaluation. ACEES actsacted in an advisory capacity to provide RIDE with:

- feedback on key evaluation system deliverables; and<sub>1</sub>

- direction for overall system development through the design principles.

The ACEES committee first met on June 21, 2010, and ~~is continuing~~continued to meet throughout the design and implementation of the Rhode Island Model Evaluation System. ~~ACEES committee materials and ACEES committee members can be viewed online.~~

Through ACEES, educators from 23 LEAs and organizations throughout Rhode Island participated in the development of the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System. Six working groups developed and refined the content, and the ACEES committee reviewed their work. Three teachers of English ~~and~~Learners and three teachers of students with disabilities were members of these groups. Teachers of English Learners and teachers of students with disabilities participated in working-group sessions and attended open meetings designed to gather input from educators across the state. During the design process, RIDE staff members met on multiple occasions with the Association of Rhode Island Administrators of Special Education (ARIASE) and the English Language Learners Advisory Council to discuss evaluations.

RIDE continues to seek feedback during each year of implementation -to improve the evaluation system based on feedback from ~~educator~~educators. During 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 RIDE continued to survey all teachers, principals, support professionals and central office administrators to better understand their perspective on the design and implementation of new systems. The most current ~~surveys~~survey yielded responses from over 3900 teachers, 1300 support professionals, 310 building administrators, and 127 central office administrators. Additionally, during 2012-2013 the Commissioner began to meet monthly with representative principals and superintendents to advise RIDE. This group is known as the Educator Evaluation Advisory Committee and continues to meet monthly to review feedback and recommend adjustments to the system.

During the first year of full implementation, 2012-2013, it was evident from the feedback that special educators were struggling with guidance more than other groups of teachers. RIDE sought volunteers to serve on a work group to examine all aspects of evaluation to ensure a high quality system and guidance for special educators. Their input resulted in the development of Student Outcome Objectives (SOOs) that are being used by support professionals and some special educators. At the same time, a work group for support professionals was established to design both practice and student learning components for these professionals. Given that this model ~~is~~was in gradual implementation during 2013-2014, the work group ~~continues~~continued to meet to improve the model for full implementation during 2014-2015.

### ***Flexibility for LEAs***

The *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* allow for LEAs that do not elect to participate in the Rhode Island Model Evaluation System (the Rhode Island Model) to design or adapt their own system to meet the requirements set forth in the *RI Educator Evaluation*

*Standards.* Any LEA evaluation system that is distinct from the Rhode Island Model must be submitted to RIDE to secure approval of the system. If an LEA is unable to independently meet the standards, then the LEA must adopt the Rhode Island Model.

RIDE prepared guidelines and resources that inform LEAs on what to submit for approval, including format, links to standards, supporting documentation, deadlines, and other specifics. RIDE reviews documentation for compliance with the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*. All 79 districts that elected to develop their own systems had their designs reviewed, and they all received initial approval. To gain full approval, all 79 districts ~~will need~~needed to resubmit their models to address open issues. The guidelines and resources for districts that elected to develop their own evaluation system in compliance with the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* are posted on the RIDE Web site.

The process of developing an evaluation system to meet the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards is a significant undertaking. Districts that elected to follow this pathway did so with the belief that they would be adapting a system that is in existence and that can be modified to meet the standards. RIDE recommended that districts begin by developing an understanding of the standards and rubrics for approved systems and then review the district's current system to identify gaps and to develop strategies to address these areas in the redesign or modification of the current system. RIDE encouraged districts to take the gap-analysis approach as the first step in review, including a set of yes/no questions to evaluate how well the current evaluation-system structure matches the expectations of the Educator Evaluation System Standards. Districts were asked to answer a set of yes/no questions, and whenever the answer was "no" or "partially," preliminary ideas for modifying the current system were to be noted so as to create the infrastructure necessary to create and sustain a system that meets RIDE standards. Districts were also asked keep a running log of the evidence that supports "yes" or "partially" ratings so that this data could be used in the preparation of the proposed plan that the district would write in response to the guidelines document.

In the fall of 2009, the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals (RIFTHP) received a grant from the American Federation of Teachers to develop a model urban evaluation system. The RIFTHP brought together labor-management teams from the six most densely populated urban districts (including active participation from Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket) to work collaboratively with RIFTHP and RIDE to develop a model educator evaluation and support system that ~~meet~~meets the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*. Since 2009, the six districts have been meeting ~~monthly~~regularly to assess their evaluation systems against the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, review models of educator evaluation, and work with nationally recognized experts to design a model urban evaluation system that was piloted in the 2010-11 school year. RIDE has continued to work collaboratively with the RIFTHP group and has granted ~~initial approved~~approval of its evaluation system, the Innovation Initiative on Educator Evaluation (Innovation Model). Six urban districts are implementing the Innovation Model for teachers. These same six

districts are implementing the RI Model for building administrators and have received ~~initial~~ approval for their own support ~~professional~~professionals' model.

In addition to the Rhode Island Model and the Innovation Model, one LEA (Coventry) has developed its own evaluation system and two charter schools (The Learning Community and Achievement First) have received approval for their teacher evaluation models. Coventry also has implemented an approved building administrator evaluation model. All other LEAs are using implementing the Rhode Island Model for Educator ~~Evaluations~~Evaluation. Though there are seven LEAs and two charter schools that have received approval for teacher evaluation systems, it is important to note that RIDE has defined the required student learning measures for all systems and provides the training in this area to all LEAs. ~~All RI evaluation systems must result in an annual rating for educators.~~ Systems must include formal and informal observations, information from students, parents and others, state defined measures of student learning and assessments of professional responsibilities in addition to the areas of practice and student learning. Written feedback is required throughout the process in order to provide actionable feedback so educators can develop professional growth plans or improvement plans that are aligned to the feedback and to school and district needs. By integrating these multiple measures and by focusing on improvement, we will improve the instruction in schools and student growth and achievement. The Evaluation System Standards outline an expectation of annual evaluation. During the 2014 legislative season, the Rhode Island House and Senate passed legislation outlining a cyclical process for educators who are effective and highly effective. In short, the legislation stipulates that educators who are rated effective are evaluated no more than every two years while educators who are rated highly effective are evaluated no more than once every three years. A link to the legislation is here. Interpretation and guidance is posted on the RIDE website.

### 3.B Ensure LEAs Implement Evaluation and Support Systems

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

## Overview of the Rhode Island Evaluation System

As discussed in 3.A., the Board of Regents has promulgated regulatory Educator Evaluation System Standards (*RI Educator Evaluation Standards*) that apply to all public schools in Rhode Island. These standards go beyond the level of mere guidance; they are regulatory, and all educator-evaluation systems in Rhode Island must meet these legal standards. To put these standards into action, RIDE (as discussed in 3.A.), in partnership

with educators across the state, developed the Rhode Island Model for Education Evaluation.

Most LEAs adopted the Rhode Island Model; however, as discussed in 3.A. seven LEAs and two charter schools developed their own district-level models. RIDE has ~~initially~~ approved both alternate models as meeting all of the requirements of the Evaluation System Standards. The rubric and other documents required for approval were noted in 3.A.

### Elements of the Rhode Island Evaluation System

An effective teacher can change the course of a student's life. Research has shown that teacher quality is the single most important school-based factor influencing student achievement, so, naturally, a top priority should be giving teachers the guidance and support they need to be successful. A fair and accurate evaluation system is a critical tool for developing and improving the effectiveness of our teachers while also recognizing the outstanding performance of our most successful teachers.

Unfortunately, the evaluation models that had been in use in the majority of our schools did not provide the kind of feedback and support teachers deserve as professionals. Often, evaluations were infrequent or inconsistent, with little consideration for the teacher's professional development or how much students were actually learning in the classroom.

Our Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards (*RI Educator Evaluation Standards*), which have the force of law, require a local evaluation system that uses multiple measures to determine educator effectiveness, based primarily on impact on student growth and academic achievement. The *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* call for annual evaluations; although, as noted, recent legislation introduced a cyclical process for educators receiving ratings of Effective or Highly Effective. Educator-evaluation systems in Rhode Island focus on collaboration and feedback to fuel professional growth and on specific goals and objectives to measure progress.

To meet the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, each LEA's evaluation system must:

- base evaluation of educator effectiveness “*primarily on evidence of impact on **student growth and academic achievement***,” and
- differentiate educators into **four levels** of effectiveness (highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective).

In accordance with the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, all educators will receive clear, actionable feedback in order to improve, and any educator who receives a rating of Developing or Ineffective will receive more targeted support to accelerate improvement. These educators will work with their evaluator to develop a detailed Improvement Plan with clear objectives, benchmarks, and timelines and to identify an improvement team to assist with their development.

In order to meet the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, each LEA's evaluation system must use multiple observations and other measures to **annually** evaluate effectiveness of **all** educators, including teachers, principals, and professional support staff.

Evaluations ~~may be~~ conducted more frequently if appropriate, depending on the educators' experience, and assignment, ~~or~~. Evaluations also may be conducted more frequently due to prior evaluation outcomes, or concerns from principals. RIDE believes that fair, valid, and reliable evaluation systems are important because they provide opportunities to acknowledge best practices and to offer support when needed.

To determine overall educator effectiveness, educator evaluations in Rhode Island considers three central components:

- Professional Practice; (Classroom Environment and Instruction);
- Professional Responsibilities; and,
- Student Learning.

RIDE developed matrices that show how the three components of the evaluation system – student growth, professional practice, and professional responsibilities – interact to determine the educator's final composite effectiveness rating -- <http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/GuidebooksForms.aspx>

### ***Professional Practice***

Professional Practice encompasses a spectrum of knowledge and skills that result in effective instruction, based on the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards or Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership. For the RI Model, working ~~group~~groups of teachers, administrators, and other educators from around the state developed the ~~rubric~~rubrics that ~~was~~were field tested, revised and ~~is being~~have been implemented for gradual implementation this year, since 2012-2013. Teachers are evaluated on a range of professional practices, including: the implementation of lesson plans, use of critical thinking tools, strategies to engage students and the ability to create a safe learning environment. There are two primary domains in Professional Practice for teachers: Classroom Environment and Classroom Instruction. School-based administrators are being evaluated on elements relating to their leadership skills, such as the ability to establish and maintain a school mission, the ability to evaluate staff or the ability to develop a strong collaborative culture.

According to the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, measures of "quality of instruction" (or Professional Practice) must include, at a minimum, observations of educator practice using valid and accurate observation rubrics and tools. Both formal and informal observations must be integrated into all systems. The feedback RIDE received on RI Model rubrics indicates that they can be applied to the varied settings encountered by teachers of English Learners and teachers of students with disabilities. Other systems being implemented gradually ~~this year report~~during 2011-2012 reported similar feedback. -- In the 2013-2014 mid-year survey building administrators affirmed that each of the six component areas in the practice rubric for building administrators is critical.

Support professionals ~~are currently implementing~~implemented the initial version of their practice rubric. ~~These~~ during 2013-2014. As a result of gradual implementation, the practice rubric for support professionals was modified to better reflect the authenticity of their roles in districts.

The evaluation rubrics and tools ~~will~~ allow teachers, principals and support ~~professionalsto~~professionals to receive ongoing, timely, and constructive feedback about their professional practice that will lead toward the development of an individualized professional-development plan. Further, the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* require LEAs to collect and analyze data about individuals' and groups of educators' professional-development needs so as to develop coherent plans to address these needs. The evaluation system must "provide feedback on performance to all educators to support continuous professional development."

### ***Professional Responsibility***

Professional responsibility ~~relates to~~defines the educator's role and responsibility within the learning community, including participation in decision-making, willingness to help and be helped by others in support of student learning, and efforts to advocate for students. We developed and posted on our website [rubrics](#) that outline the specific expectations for all educators regarding Professional Responsibility.

### ***Student Learning***

The most heavily weighted component of teachers' ~~and,~~ principals' and support professionals' evaluations must be based on evidence of student growth and academic achievement. ~~We base evaluation decisions on~~We include educators' effect on student growth and achievement because we believe that this is the most important measure of the teacher ~~and,~~ principal and support professional – and that adults' performance measures should be tied to the performance of their students. This is our mechanism to ensure that students will have access to high-quality instruction that prepares them for college, careers, and life.

### ***Student Learning: Student Learning Objectives***

Many teachers in Rhode Island have for many years been setting standards-aligned goals for their students. Teachers are planning backward to align their daily and weekly instruction with their long-term goals, giving valid and rigorous assessments on an ongoing basis to measure student progress toward their goals, and instructing their students powerfully, informed by the goals, plans, and assessments.

The Rhode Island Model and all other approved educator-evaluation systems in Rhode Island make this best practice a part of every teacher's planning and every principal's leadership, as teachers and principals set Student Learning Objectives through which evaluators will measure growth for all teachers and schools, including those who teach in grades or subjects that are not part of the state assessment system.

Student learning is best measured by looking at multiple sources. Evaluators are working with both teachers and school-based administrators to set Student Learning Objectives that measure and assess the growth of student learning in every classroom. Student Learning Objectives are specific, measurable goals based on Rhode Island content standards or other nationally recognized standards that may be aligned with the School Improvement Plan and the LEA's strategic plan. These goals are not student-specific; they are classroom-wide or relating to specific groupings of students within a classroom.

A Student Learning Objective is a long-term (typically one semester or one school year) academic goal that teachers set for groups of students. It must be specific, measurable, based on available prior student-learning data, and aligned with state standards as well as with relevant school and district priorities.

Student Learning Objectives should represent the most important learning during an interval of instruction and may be based on *progress* or *mastery*. Objectives based on *progress* require students to make a certain amount of progress from a baseline measure toward a clear benchmark of performance (e.g., all students will move up 3 reading levels within one year). Objectives based on *mastery* require students to demonstrate a particular level of skill and knowledge in that specific course content, regardless of any baseline measures (e.g., all students will be reading level W texts by the end of the year).

Teachers work together with other teachers and administrators to develop a set of Student Learning Objectives for each grade level, course, or school. All teachers of the same course in the same school use the same set of objectives, although specific *targets* may vary if student starting points differ among classes. Teachers may add additional objectives beyond the required 2 to 4 range if their teaching context requires it (e.g., those teaching more than 4 different subjects).

Student Learning Objectives present an opportunity for teachers and administrators to be closely involved in shaping the manner in which their practice and the performance of their students is evaluated and measured. With the use of Student Learning Objectives, educators work together to determine how content should be prioritized and to establish clear expectations for how student learning should be assessed. Student Learning Objectives allow for the use of multiple measures of assessment, including existing off-the-shelf assessments and those objectives that are developed by teams of educators. Teachers and administrators set targets based upon available data for their specific population of students.

Setting and attaining Student Learning Objectives requires the purposeful use of data through both formal and informal assessments. This process recognizes and documents academic gains in tested and non-tested grades and subjects and supplements NECAP (or, [after 2014 beginning in 2015](#), PARCC) scores in tested grades and subjects. Finally, Student Learning Objectives focus instruction on district and school improvement plans and on student needs.

To ensure that all educators have the support they need to develop appropriate Student Learning Objectives, RIDE created a cross-office team to work with educators in the field and to draft guidance and sample Student Learning Objectives specifically for teachers of English Learners and teachers of students with disabilities. RIDE continues to meet with directors of special education and with the English Language Learners Advisory Council to receive feedback and guidance on the evaluation process and on Student Learning Objectives.

RIDE received significant feedback ~~early~~ in the ~~current~~2011-2012 school year ~~(2011-12)~~ indicating that teachers of students with disabilities needed more samples that addressed the various types of assignments found in their field. To meet this need, RIDE convened a small group of teachers of students with disabilities to assist in designing sample Student Learning Objectives. These educators have now written ~~several sample Student Learning Objectives~~several sample Student Learning Objectives for teachers of students with disabilities.

In addition to these sample Student Learning Objectives for teachers of students with disabilities, we learned that a separate FAQ on evaluations was needed for teachers of students with disabilities. We worked with these teachers to identify the questions for the FAQ, which we posted on our website and included in the Addendum for 2013-2014.

For some educators, setting or evaluating Student Learning Objectives represented a major shift in practice. It required collaboration and the use of data that was new and, at first, challenging; however, the result will be more purposeful instruction, closer monitoring of student progress, and, ultimately, greater student achievement. Over time this process will help establish statewide perspectives on student progress and learning. Survey data from the first three years of implementation confirms this assessment. There is more focus than ever on student learning and professional conversation about student progress ~~and achievement~~. Educators also report increased comfort and confidence with the SLO ~~process, though they still report there is still room for improvement in terms of quality and rigor~~.

Setting Student Learning Objectives requires being able to answer three key questions. Teachers should answer these questions with their colleagues, not in isolation:

1. What are the most important things my students must learn?
2. How will I measure how much my students learn?
3. Based on what I know about my students, what is a rigorous, but attainable target for how much and at what level should my students learn? How will my students demonstrate their knowledge and skills?

Teachers begin the process of setting Objectives by working with their colleagues to determine the most important standards and content in their grade(s) and subject(s). Ideally, these discussions occur just before school starts or early in the year. In some cases, priority standards or content may already be identified by the school or district.

Once teachers identify the priority standards and content of their Student Learning Objectives, they must determine how they will measure their students' learning over the course of the year. What assessments are available? Are they of high quality? Are they common to other teachers who teach the same grade(s) and subject(s)?

Finally, teachers must gather all available data and historical information they have on current students in order to set numerical targets for how much their students will learn over the course of the instructional period. Pre-test data or assessment data from the prior year can be used to set quantifiable targets for students. Targets should always be set using the highest-quality source of evidence available. Targets should be rigorous and attainable for all students or ambitious, based on the past performance of similar cohorts of students, when taught with best practices from the school, district, or outside the district.

Horizontal and vertical consistencies are two additional critical elements to consider when setting Student Learning Objectives. When a Student Learning Objective is horizontally consistent, all teachers in the same grade-level or subject collaborate on shared Student Learning Objectives. Vertically consistent Student Learning Objectives should be consistent with the school administration's school-level goals (for teachers in applicable subject areas and grade levels). School-level objectives, in turn, should be consistent with key district goals and priority metrics or with the school or district improvement plan.

The Student Learning Objective process is used statewide. RIDE determines the protocol for how objectives are set, monitored, and scored. LEAs have flexibility in which assessments they use in various grades and subjects and the local common-scoring rubrics they use to score student performance on those assessments. Because RIDE wants to make sure the approved educator-evaluation systems are adaptable to different contexts and in keeping with the goal of reducing duplication and unnecessary burdens on LEAs and schools, LEAs also have flexibility in determining who will evaluate teachers, especially if individuals other than administrators have conducted evaluations before.

RIDE ~~is providing~~provides training to evaluators on how to approve, monitor, and score Student Learning Objectives. RIDE is also providing direct guidance to teachers on how to set and monitor Student Learning Objectives, including a series of exemplar Student Learning Objectives for various grades and subjects that RIDE released at the beginning of the ~~current~~ (2011-12) school year-, revised for 2012-2013 and revised again for 2013-2014 while also increasing the number of samples. These exemplars ~~will serve~~served as additional guidance for full implementation in the 2012-13 school year. For 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 RIDE developed a series of on-line modules to provide additional supports to the field.

In addition, RIDE ~~is in the process of building~~built an Instructional Support System (ISS) — an online platform that ~~will house~~houses data, curriculum, and assessment materials. The ISS, ~~when complete, will facilitate~~facilitates the Student Learning Objective process by making it easier for teachers and administrators to access common assessments and student-achievement data they need to make informed decisions and ~~will reduce~~reduces duplication and unnecessary burdens on LEAs and schools.

During full administration of the evaluation system, teachers set 2 to 4 Student Learning Objectives and building administrators share a set of 42 to 64 Student Learning Objectives.

All Rhode Island LEAs, including the seven districts and two charter schools that have their own approved models are following the same approach to Student Learning Objectives throughout their evaluation systems.

RIDE has a long term strategy to address the quality, consistency, and rigor of the Student Learning Objective process. The SLO process will supplement the Student Growth Scores or will be the primary source of evidence when a growth score is not available. We understand the critical role that the SLO process has in the evaluation system. There is a two-pronged approach to addressing SLO quality. The first is embedded in the overall training conducted by the Office of Educator Quality and Certification and the second is by making explicit connections to the work in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. In combination we will:

- Identify grade/course specific SLOs for all new curricula being developed ~~under RTTT initiatives. By the end of the RTTT.~~ Over time, we will have ensured that high quality SLOs are built into the development of curricula;
- Train a core leadership team in every school in the state on how to use data to inform instruction and assessment decisions. Using student data to inform setting SLO targets will be a core part of this training;
- Build assessment literacy by providing access to on-line modules that are accessible to every teacher and administrator in RI. The focus on building valid and reliable curriculum embedded assessments will improve the evidence used for SLOs over time;
- Provide additional SLO exemplars and on-line modules on our web site to illustrate and explain the features of high quality SLOs;
- Introduce a suite of assessment tools through our Instructional Support System that include interim assessments, a test building engine, and item banks; and,
- Increase the amount of training on SLO writing, approval, and development as part of the four day Summer Institutes for all evaluators.

RIDE will continue to monitor the quality of SLO over the next several years. We will study the relationship between SLO scoring and Student Growth Scores for educators that have both scores. We will audit schools that have significant differences between the two measures to understand why they have occurred. Collectively we believe that these efforts will help us strengthen the SLOs while providing resources to support that goal. During 2014-2015, the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment is already working to strengthen assessment practices through an intensive support project with four (4) LEAs (see Principle 1 Assessment Project). This group is currently working closely with a RIDE team to examine their current local assessment system in order to improve it and reduce redundancy. This work ultimately supports the SLO process

because the process is grounded in local assessment systems.

**Student Learning: The Growth Model**

In addition to the Student Learning Objectives, The Rhode Island Growth Model will be used to measure student learning for teachers in -tested grades and subjects using PARCC beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. For these teachers, the Rhode Island Growth Model rating is based on how a teacher’s students progressed in comparison with other students throughout the state who had similar scores in previous years. To increase the accuracy and precision of this growth rating, the score will reflect two years’ worth of assessment data. The Rhode Island Growth Model will also be used as an evaluation tool for school administrators, where applicable, in combination with Student Learning Objectives.

As approved during the last amendment cycle, The Rhode Island Educator Evaluation system will not use the Median Growth Score (MGS) for individual educator’s summative ratings until 2016-2017 because of the transition to a new assessment and new assessment testing timeframe (fall to spring). If this transition were not taking place, Rhode Island would not delay further the use of a teacher median growth score in a final effectiveness rating. We plan to base the student learning component of the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation system on Student Learning Objectives (SLO) data which will be included in the final summative effectiveness ratings as it was in SY2012-2013. At the same time, we will emphasize the use of student growth data to inform instructional changes and practices, support calibration of SLOs, set SLO targets, and inform professional development planning. Based on Rhode Island’s Basic Education Program and Educator Evaluation Standards, LEAs can and should use summative evaluation ratings and possible median growth scores to inform their personnel decisions. Specifically, our approach maintains a strong component on student learning through the SLO process that applies to **all** teachers and building administrators while at the same time builds increased knowledge and capacity at the local level to understand how MGS can be used appropriately for improving educator effectiveness that results in improved student learning. While this delays the use of a student growth score in final effectiveness ratings for the 26% of teachers and principals in grades and content areas where growth can be calculated, our commitment to the use of growth data has not changed. Table 1 below outlines the variety of ways RI currently uses and will use growth data in the coming years. Table 2 clarifies how and when student learning evidence is included in Rhode Island’s Evaluation System.

**Table 1: Rhode Island’s Reporting and Use of Student Growth Data**

	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>
Instructional Program Improvement	Current students growth data available to educators based on Fall 2012 NECAP	Current students growth data available to all educators based on Fall 2013 NECAP	Current students growth data available to all educators based on Fall 2013 NECAP	Current students growth data available to all educators based on Spring 2015 PARCC	Current students growth data available to all educators based on Spring 2016 PARCC

School Accountability System Reporting	School Growth as portion of accountability index based on NECAP	School Growth as portion of accountability index based on NECAP	School Growth as portion of accountability index based on NECAP/PARCC C- pending correlation study between tests	School Growth as portion of accountability index based on PARCC	School Growth as portion of accountability index based on PARCC
Individual Educator Growth Ratings Reports and Use	Growth scores determined based on 2011-2012 rosters	One year median scores shared with all teachers via EPSS in fall 2013 (based on Fall 2012 NECAP)	Two year median scores shared with all teachers and principals via EPSS in fall 2014 (based on Fall 2013 NECAP)	Year One PARCC growth scores shared via EPSS in summer 2016.	Second Year growth scores shared and calculated in final effectiveness ratings
Use of Growth Data in the Educator Evaluation System	Emphasis on use of student growth information from GMV to understand student learning on state assessment as consider setting of SLOs	Check for the system- how growth scores compare to SLO scores, student grades and other data  Check for SLO accuracy and rigor  Data for LEAs to use when considering student and teacher assignments	Check for the system- how growth scores compare to SLO scores, student grades and other data  Check for SLO accuracy and rigor  Data for LEAs to use when considering student and teacher assignments	Check for the system- how growth scores compare to SLO scores, student grades and other data  Check for SLO accuracy and rigor  Data for LEAs to use when considering student and teacher assignments	Integrated into Final Effectiveness Rating  Continue to use the data in ways outlined in previous years
Training and Support for Building an Understanding about Growth	Principal growth sessions to understand what growth is; summer online modules	Admin sessions to understand student level and teacher level growth; use of on-line modules	Admin sessions to understand student level and teacher level growth; use of on-line modules	Building a new understanding of PARCC growth and the transition from NECAP to PARCC as part of readiness for 2016-2017; modules and in person sessions.	Prepare for summer release of ratings with growth included

**Table 2**  
**: Student Learning Evidence in Rhode Island’s Evaluation System**

School Year	Student Learning Objective Scores Included in Educator Final Effectiveness Ratings	MGS Derived and Used as Part of Evaluation System	MGS Included Educator Final Effectiveness Ratings
2012-2013	Yes	Yes	No
2013-2014	Yes	Yes	No
2014-2015	Yes	Yes	No
2015-2016	Yes	Yes (summer 2016)	No
2016-2017	Yes	Yes	Yes

Specifically, in SY 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, we ~~have already~~ completed the following steps:

- We have assigned MGS to every eligible educator within Rhode Island’s Educator Performance Support System (EPSS) in November 2013;
- In November 2014, educators were provided with a second year MGS;
- We have provided building principals access within the EPSS to view the MGS for teachers within their buildings;
- We have and will continue to provide workshops to building principals and central office administrators to learn how MGS should be reviewed for their impact on professional development, student assignments, and calibrating SLO targets.

In addition to the steps already completed we will also complete the following steps:

- We will continue to analyze SLO and ~~NECAP~~state assessment data to determine the correlation between the two measures. Additional phases of analysis include reviews of data for groups of teachers as well as analysis at the individual level.
- We will continue to host training sessions and discussion sessions to build understanding of the scores and the uses of the scores. New modules or on-line courses will be developed to assist in building an understanding of the student growth scores, educator median scores and the uses of the data to inform instructional improvement and student learning.
- Even though we cannot make assumptions about how PARCC growth data will impact special educators or other groups of educators, we ~~will continue~~continued during 2013-2014 to analyze NECAP data to more deeply understand how

growth scores impact educators and we will review PARCC data, once it is available, to understand how that data will impact educators.

- Our Technical Advisory Committee ~~will review~~reviewed our approved amendment plan in March 2014 to offer feedback to RI for additional technical assistance to LEAs and additional considerations for transitioning successfully from NECAP to PARCC.

Starting in the 2013-14 school year, teachers who are responsible for student learning in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3 through 7 and building administrators in schools with students in grades 3 through 7 will receive ~~a~~ rating information based on their students' growth on the NECAP ELA and mathematics assessments, as compared with students with a similar academic score history, however, these scores will not be factored into the summary rating for an individual teacher. The first year of growth-model scores ~~will be~~was available in the 2012-13 school year. We will not use the growth-model scores in evaluations, however, until we have two years of data from the PARCC assessments – that is, until 2016-2017.

RIDE will calculate the growth-model scores and supply the scores to evaluators. The scores will help determine the educator's summative rating on Student Learning.

RIDE has developed guidance for districts to help in determining who, in addition to the teacher of record, would be a contributing educator accountable for student growth. This guidance, "A Tool to Assist in the Development of Policies and Practices for Identifying Contributing Educators," contains detailed information about including contributing teachers, notably teachers of English Learners and teachers of students with disabilities, within the growth determinations for the evaluation system.

RIDE ~~is~~has engaged ~~in the early stages of reviewing~~substantial analyses of teacher-course-student linked growth data. As we ~~conduct~~conducted our ~~initial~~ analysis, we ~~are~~ paying~~paid~~ particular attention to how the results of growth-model data for teachers of English Learners and teachers of students with disabilities. In February 2012, the Rhode Island Technical Advisory Committee met to review growth data and to make recommendations to RIDE for further analysis. The RIDE Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members are national experts in their fields of educator quality and measurement. The TAC ~~meet~~has met three or four times each year to provide guidance to RIDE on all aspects of the RI Model, including long term validity plans and monitoring implementation fidelity. RIDE used currently available NECAP data to understand the data and is now looking ahead to having PARCC data so we can understand how growth will perform. RIDE will continue to seek TAC guidance as we transition to PARCC.

~~During the current school year, RIDE will have derived benchmark measures for student growth for all teachers who teach subjects or grades that are part of the state assessment system. During the ensuing school year (2012-13), we will have one year of data on student growth for these teachers.~~ We will not use student growth as a factor in

evaluations until we have two consecutive years of growth data from the same assessment, that is, until 2016-2017.

Two consecutive data points (e.g., a student's test scores from his or her grade 4 and grade 5 NECAP mathematics tests) are needed to calculate Rhode Island Growth Model results. Each student's growth is compared with that of his or her *academic peers*. Academic peers are defined as all students *statewide* with a similar **NECAPPARCC** score history, regardless of student demographics or program information (e.g., race/ethnicity, SES, IEP, LEP). The student's growth is measured as a percentile from 1-99, with higher values indicating more growth relative to academic peers. For example, a student with a *Student Growth Percentile* of 90 showed more growth than 90 percent of his or her academic peers. With the Rhode Island Growth Model, a student can have a high Student Growth Percentile even when performance is not yet at a proficient level.

For a group of students (e.g., in a classroom or school), Student Growth Percentile data ~~can~~ will be aggregated to determine the median Student Growth Percentile of the group of students. To do so, all tested students' Student Growth Percentiles are arranged in order (i.e.g., 1-99) to determine the median Student Growth Percentile, which is most representative of the school or of the teacher's students. The median Student Growth Percentile is the point at which half of the students' Student Growth Percentiles are above and half are below.

Just as we will use the Growth Model as part of the process of evaluation of teachers, aggregating data for all tested students in their classrooms, we will also use the Growth Model as part of the process of evaluation of principals, aggregating data for all tested students in their school.

## Implementing the Evaluation System

### ***Field testing and implementation of the evaluation system***

RIDE field-tested the evaluation systems during the ~~previous~~2010-2011 school year, beginning in March, when four LEAs implemented some aspects of the Rhode Island Model, but the LEAs did not use the evaluations as the basis for any personnel decisions.

The Rhode Island Model districts and districts developing their own systems ~~will be~~were held to the same timelines for implementation. Through the field testing (~~last school year~~2010-2011) and gradual implementation of educator evaluations (~~this school year~~2011-2012) in all LEAs, RIDE ~~is implementing~~implemented a thoughtfully designed system that incorporates the insights and suggestions of teachers and administrators. School-based administrators and teachers in all districts ~~are participating~~participated in each element of the evaluation process, at varying levels, during ~~this year of~~ gradual implementation in an effort to help everyone feel comfortable with the process. All LEAs gradually implemented their approved evaluation systems for teachers and

administrators during the 2011-2012 school year. Systems were fully implemented during the 2012-2013 school year. and continue to be fully implemented.

Development of a model for evaluating support professionals took place during the 2012-2013 school year with a work group of support professionals. During the 2013-2014 school year, the model is-beingwas implemented gradually in all LEAs. Like the teacher and administrator models this means that support professionals are participatingparticipated in each element of the evaluation process, at varying levels, in an effort to prepare for full implementation. Full implementation is taking place during the current (2014-2015) school year.

### ***Gradual implementation of the evaluation system***

All Rhode Island school LEAs are-gradually implementingimplemented an evaluation system during the current2011-2012 school year. All LEAs are implementingimplemented approved evaluation systems on a gradual basis, with the exception of two districts that are going through full implementation of the Rhode Island Model. Here is our description of gradual implementation:

An effective evaluation system is key to developing, supporting and improving the effectiveness of our educators as well as recognizing the outstanding performance of our most effective teachers and leaders. While it is substantial work to implement a new evaluation system, it is the right work. We owe it to our educators and our students to work together to overcome the challenges to implementing this new system. Before the Rhode Island Model iswas fully implemented in school year 2012-13, we wantwanted to ensure that educators gethad a chance to practice implementing the system and provide feedback to RIDE. Gradual implementation allowsallowed districts to identify challenges and begin developing solutions before full implementation beginsbegan in 2012-13.

~~The LEAs that are in the process of~~During gradual implementation~~-are engaging, LEAs engaged~~ in all aspects of the educator-evaluation system ~~during the current school year (2011-12)~~ but with fewer required observations, Student Learning Objectives, and Professional Growth Goals. Every component of the system will-bewas introduced gradually throughout the year. This approach will-enableenabled educators to acclimate to the Rhode Island Model in a year of hands-on learning, before final evaluation ratings carry more weight. Teachers ~~have~~ set only two Student Learning Objectives and one Professional Growth Goal, and they will-havehad only two classroom observations (one long, one short). Under full implementation, teachers ~~will~~ set up to four Student Learning Objectives, as well as Professional Growth Goals and several observations. Principals are-also followingfollowed a gradual implementation of their own evaluation during the current school year. ~~–They will also establishestablished~~ one professional goal, two student learning objectives and participate in two school site visits.

All LEAs will-fully implementimplemented evaluation systems during the 2012-13 school year, incorporating lessons learned from the year of gradual implementation. Even

beyond these initial years, we will continuously improve the evaluation systems, based on educators' feedback and experience.

During development and during the initial years of implementation-, RIDE has continued to meet -with and survey groups of educators to understand better- the use of rubrics and the development of Student Learning Objectives/Student Outcome Objectives. Mid-year survey results ~~show~~showed positive trends in several areas. The survey information also ~~outlines~~outlined areas of technical assistance and support still needed. Many of the challenges were and are local challenges. RIDE continues to clarify its role in supporting the local implementation of state-wide developed systems and policies.

One of the main purposes of this gradual implementation year is was to give districts and schools the opportunity to develop context-specific solutions to implementation challenges. There is no one right answer to the question about how to do this well. Instituting the new system is exceptionally difficult work for districts and schools, but has been shown to dramatically impact the professionalism, culture and collegiality within schools.

During gradual implementation, each evaluator is was required to complete a series of training sessions focused on the specifics of the evaluation system, including sessions on Student Learning, Professional Growth Plans, observations and feedback, and conferencing. These training sessions ~~are being~~were led by Intermediary Service Providers—experienced teachers and administrators whom RIDE has trained. A second series of training sessions ~~are occurring~~occurred for the evaluators of building administrators.

### ***Support for implementation of the evaluation system***

To ensure that teachers receive information about the model, RIDE has ~~also~~ designed communication tools for building administrators to share directly with teachers in their schools. These materials include shorter communication documents as well as “meeting in a box” materials and on-line modules. In preparation for full implementation, evaluators ~~will receive~~received more targeted follow-up training, beyond the initial orientation to the model. During the 2013-2014 school year, RIDE adjusted its training strategy in response to LEA leadership teams. After several opportunities to work across districts, teams determined more time was needed to calibrate at the local level. In lieu of state-wide trainings, RIDE staff ~~are offering~~offered calibration sessions for professional practice, SLO approval, providing feedback and scoring SLOs. During the summer of 2014, RIDE continued to offer refresher training for all evaluators. This training included training on the support professional model in preparation for full implementation during 2014-2015. Additionally, RIDE continues to offer calibration sessions to districts. During 2014-2015 RIDE is partnering closely with approximately 6 principals across the state to support and better understand what is needed for high quality implementation of a system that supports improvement. Finally, the RIDE Educator Evaluation web page is updated -throughout the year with additional resources, including Student Learning Objective resources.

The effective implementation of the model evaluation system depends upon having well-trained evaluators. In most cases, teachers- are evaluated by their school principal. On occasion, they may be evaluated by a trained evaluator with relevant content knowledge or instructional expertise. ~~To ensure that all educators receive annual evaluations, including educators who do not have primary responsibility for the instruction of English Learners and of students with disabilities, evaluation systems in Rhode Island~~ LEAs may use “complementary evaluators.” These complementary evaluators may have specialized expertise in a content area or grade level and may assist the building principal or primary evaluator in completing the evaluation process. All developed guidance and rubrics for evaluations specifically address team teaching and co-teaching scenarios. All expectations of competency and of effect on student growth apply to every teacher, regardless of whether he or she is assigned as a sole classroom teacher or as a co-teacher, such as a teacher of English Learners or a teacher of students with disabilities. School-based administrators are evaluated by superintendents or their designees.

To ensure that LEAs have the capacity needed to implement the model evaluation system, ~~these~~ trained Intermediary Service Providers (ISPs) ~~are~~were available to LEAs, through Race to the Top funding. Each LEA ~~has~~had access to ISPs for a specified number of days based on their RTTT funding. Additional days ~~may~~could be negotiated at the LEA’s request. The ISPs ~~are~~were highly trained and are available to support both evaluators and teachers as needed. Some LEAs ~~have~~ supplemented their RTTT funding in order to release a full time educator to serve as a district Evaluation ISP. These educators ~~are~~were trained by RIDE with the other statewide ISPs to ensure consistency in approach. As Rhode Island approaches the end of Race to the Top, districts have shifted their attention to building local capacity. Principal caseload continues to be a challenge for Rhode Island, but other educators in varied roles are supporting the implementation of evaluation systems. The calibration sessions implemented during 2013-2014 are all designed using protocols that can be replicated and implemented easily by local leaders as follow up sessions in the future or as sessions conducted with teachers in order to deepen their understanding of the system. Some of the supports that ISPs have provided to LEAs include: conducting observations; helping teachers set student-learning objectives; supporting conferences; giving feedback; holding district- or school-level information or training sessions; and supporting and collaborating with principals and teachers in the implementation of the model evaluation system. As confidence and comfort levels have increased during the first two years of full implementation, the need for ISP support has decreased. This is a positive indication that LEAs are taking ownership of the quality of implementation of the systems.

In hiring the ISPs, RIDE established the following qualifications as criteria for applicants:

- evidence of strong leadership and facilitation skills;
- previous experience developing and leading teacher professional development;
- excellent project-management and organization skills;

- excellent oral-communication and writing skills;
- outstanding critical-thinking skills;
- the ability to work effectively with others at all levels of an organization;
- capacity to work independently and to manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously;
- the ability to identify challenges and to be flexible to actively work to find solutions;
- outstanding interpersonal and teamwork skills;
- openness and responsiveness to feedback;
- comfort working with computers and strong working knowledge of the Microsoft Office suite;
- familiarity with a range of school settings within Rhode Island, including high-need schools; and
- holding or recently holding valid certification as a teacher or administrator or having recent experience in higher education.

Evaluation ISPs are responsible for:

- leading training for district personnel or teams on the evaluation system; and
- supporting districts, schools, and educators with on-the-ground evaluation system implementation and technical support (e.g., collaborating with principals, teachers and district administrators; calibrating and norming ratings).

Some of the supports that ISPs provide to LEAs include:

- conducting observations;
- helping teachers set student-learning objectives;
- supporting conferences;
- giving feedback;
- holding district- or school-level information or training sessions; and
- supporting and collaborating with principals and teachers in the implementation of the model evaluation system.

~~To ensure that all educators receive annual evaluations, including educators who do not have primary responsibility for the instruction of English learners and of students with disabilities, evaluation systems in Rhode Island may use “complementary evaluators.” These complementary evaluators may have specialized expertise in a content area or grade level and may assist the building principal or primary evaluator in completing the evaluation process. All developed guidance and rubrics for evaluations specifically address team teaching and co-teaching scenarios. All expectations of competency and of effect on student growth apply to every teacher, regardless of whether he or she is assigned as a sole classroom teacher or as a co-teacher, such as a teacher of English Learners or a teacher of students with disabilities.~~

## ***Providing guidance on evaluations***

To ensure successful implementation of systems of educator evaluation in Rhode Island, RIDE is engaged in an ambitious training schedule for all evaluators in LEAs that have selected the Rhode Island Model. In 2011 every LEA submitted a list of evaluators for every school and within the central office. Once identified, it is required that they attend all required training. We ~~will~~ repeat the summer training ~~efover~~ multiple weeks and locations in order to ensure that everyone can coordinate training with their summer schedules.

During the ~~-2011- 2012 school year-~~, training ~~involvesinvolved~~ four “modules.” All evaluators ~~are receivingreceived~~ training through these modules. Training ~~will continuecontinued~~ in the ~~summersummers~~ of 2012, ~~2013 and 2014,~~ with four-day training seminars ~~and with two half-day seminars as follow-up during the next school year (2012-13).~~ Here is a description of the summer academies:

Academy for Personnel Evaluating Teachers: (New Evaluator): Four-day rigorous training (9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. each day) seeking to prepare personnel evaluating teachers to accurately observe and rate practice, lead professional feedback conversations, set and approve Student Learning Objectives, and engage with the Educator Performance and Support System.

Academy for Personnel Evaluating Building Administrators: ~~-~~Three-day rigorous training (9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. each day) seeking to prepare personnel evaluating building administrators to conduct effective school visits and accurately rate performance, lead professional feedback conversations, approve school wide Student Learning Objectives, and engage with the Educator Performance and Support System.

During the summer of 2013, 2 day follow up trainings were required for all evaluators. During the 2013-2014 school year, RIDE has replaced traditional training sessions with calibration sessions. Each LEA must participate in two of four calibration sessions. They focus on professional practice, approving SLOs, providing feedback and scoring SLOs. Finally, during summer 2014 RIDE ~~will~~ again ~~requirerequired~~ two-day training for all evaluators of teachers and support professionals. During the 2014-2015 school year RIDE is partnering with a small group of principals for deep support around implementation. A new calibration session is also being offered to all districts for the support professional model. Descriptions of the summer training sessions can be found here- Summer Training Resources - Educator Evaluation - Teachers & Administrators Excellent Educators - Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/SummerTraining.asp>  
~~x-~~

~~The Rhode Island Educator Evaluation Guide to Implementation here-~~  
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/GuidebooksForms.aspx>

RIDE has also provided training for educators in the seven districts and two charter schools that have *not* selected the Rhode Island Model, -regarding the use of Student Learning Objectives as one of the valid and reliable measures of Student Learning. These districts and schools must also participate in two of the four calibration sessions during 2013-2014. and must continue to participate in summer training

In addition to these resources for evaluators,- all LEAs have their own District Evaluation Committee to ensure successful implementation of the evaluation system at the local level.

District evaluation systems are an integral part of the district human-capital management system and are supported by district educators who regularly review and revise the system in response to systematic feedback and changing district needs.

All districts must establish and support a District Evaluation Committee that includes teachers, support professionals, administrators, and union representatives. The committee solicits feedback from others (e.g., students, parents, assessment experts), who bring added perspective or expertise when appropriate. The committee reviews the effectiveness of the evaluation system; the validity and utility of the data produced by the system; the fairness, accuracy, and consistency of decisions made; and the currency of the system. The committee then uses the information from the analysis to make recommendations for revisions to the system. Finally, the District Evaluation Committee communicates data from the evaluation system to district personnel responsible for strategic planning and professional development to work in partnership toward a coherent approach to educator quality, professional development, and continuous organizational improvement.

The District Evaluation Committee works with district leadership to assure the resources of time, financial support, and evaluation expertise necessary to maintain the quality of the evaluation system.

### **Reviewing and Approving Evaluation Systems**

To comply with state regulations, including the Rhode Island Standards for Educator Evaluation (*RI Educator Evaluation Standards*) and the Rhode Island Basic Education Program (BEP), LEAs must either:

- *adapt* their own educator evaluation system to “primarily” include student growth and achievement and meet state standards; or
- *adopt* a state-provided educator evaluation system, the *Rhode Island Educator Evaluation Model System* (The Rhode Island Model).

Each LEA is responsible for meeting the RIDE reporting requirements for assuring the quality of educator evaluation.

RIDE has developed a detailed and rigorous rubric based on the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards to approve all systems*. The rubric addresses:

- the quality of the design, rubrics, and instruments used to measure educators' professional practice, responsibilities, and content knowledge;
- how well evaluation systems ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency of educator ratings;
- the engagement of principals, support professionals, and teachers in ongoing evaluation system development;
- how the district uses evaluation results to inform key human resource decisions; and
- how systems use evaluation data to create professional development plans.

RIDE holds LEAs accountable for the use of evaluation data for the purposes designated in their approved evaluation-system designs. The integration of information generated from LEA-reported educator evaluations and the Rhode Island teacher-certification database along with the student information in the RIDE [Data Warehouse DataHub](#) will allow RIDE to collect, analyze, and report extensive data. RIDE will have the capacity to use this information to monitor the extent to which LEAs are actually using evaluations to inform decisions about educator assignment, professional development, compensation, promotion, tenure, renewal, and termination, and RIDE will support LEAs to help ensure that they are using educator evaluations to develop cadres of highly effective teachers and school leaders.

### ***Valid measures for evaluations***

An evaluation based on multiple measures, including observations of practice and evidence of student learning, provides the best and most complete assessment of educator effectiveness. Neither observations nor test scores alone should be the sole basis of an evaluation. Many validation safeguards have been built into the system, including training for evaluators, ongoing refinement of the system, and the opportunity to review an evaluation if a teacher or administrator feels it is inaccurate.

Rhode Island's winning application to Race to the Top, which netted \$75 million in federal funds, included a commitment to the creation of an educator-evaluation system focused on professional growth and student learning. In addition to RIDE's in-house experts, a team of evaluation specialists ~~is being~~ was trained to support schools with the ongoing evaluation process.

Rhode Island educator-evaluation systems must meet certain criteria regarding the evaluators and their training in order to ensure that the valid measures are used consistently and accurately across all schools in each district. All Rhode Island educator-evaluation systems must:

- use evaluators who are trained and able to make valid and accurate judgments;

- ensure that the evaluation team as a whole has sufficient diversity of experience and content knowledge to accurately assess educators across subjects, grades, and programs (including ELL and special education settings); and
- include norming mechanisms to regularly confirm the accuracy and reliability of evaluator ratings.

Evaluation systems in Rhode Island will continue to improve based on educators' experiences and continued feedback from the Technical Advisory Committee, from educators in the field, and from formal reviews of the data.

At the state level, RIDE will periodically audit the evaluation process within districts to ensure that evaluations are fair and accurate and that they adhere to the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*. Additionally, all evaluators will be trained and must demonstrate the ability to make accurate judgments.

As we ~~develop~~developed our Educator Performance and Support System, the data platform that ~~will support~~ supports the implementation and management of educator-evaluation systems across Rhode Island, ~~we anticipate that this data~~ the platform ~~will generate~~ generates LEA level reports that will serve as warning flags, indicating when the LEA should conduct an audit of the evaluation system. RIDE will identify similar warning flags using multiple data sources available at the state level, including a review of ratings in all components of the system to identify large discrepancies that merit further review.

Each LEA is responsible for ensuring that its evaluation system is implemented with fidelity by reviewing the accuracy and utility of the data produced and by viewing the decisions made for fairness and consistency. Each LEA must provide procedural safeguards to ensure the integrity of the system, including evaluation appeals. Appeals will be handled at the LEA level, in accordance with LEA policy and practice, collective-bargaining agreements, and processes set forth by the District Evaluation Committee. In the event that an evaluation process yields a contradictory outcome (e.g., a teacher has an extremely high Student Learning rating and an extremely low rating in Professional Practice and Professional Responsibilities), a review of the evaluation will be conducted at the LEA level.

All approved educator-evaluation systems in Rhode Island must align with the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards, the Rhode Island Educator Code of Professional Responsibility, and the Standards for Educational Leadership in Rhode Island (Leadership Standards). The Rhode Island Model aligns with all of these standards and uses valid and reliable measures to evaluate Professional Practice, Professional Responsibilities, and, as described in 3.A.ii., evidence of student growth and achievement base on statewide assessments, student-learning objectives, and other measures of student learning.

Those LEAs that chose *not* to adopt the Rhode Island Model had to meet the same criteria as outlined in the District Guidelines for approval of evaluation systems, which



include evidence of quality of instruction, of student learning, and of professional responsibilities. For approval of their systems, these LEAs had to submit to RIDE a description of the evaluation instruments and how they are to be used.

To ensure that measures are valid and reliable, the application for LEAs seeking approval of an evaluation system includes these requirements and questions:

Provide an overview of the evaluation of teachers by listing each instrument and providing a brief description.

How is teacher observation included in the evaluation of quality of instruction? Describe the instrument(s) used and attach copies of the instrument (e.g., directions, rubric, forms, and feedback) to this proposal.

In your description, address all of the following points:

- What is the process of observation?
- What Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards are measured in the observation?
- How frequently is observation conducted?
- What are the possible ratings from the observation?
- What other parameters govern the observation?
- What feedback is provided?
- Who conducts the observation?
- What qualifications are necessary to be an observer?
- How are they trained and how are their evaluations monitored for continued accuracy?
- What other information would help RIDE understand the instrument(s)?

How evidence of student learning is included in the teacher's evaluation? Describe the instrument(s) used and attach copies of the instrument (e.g., directions, rubric, forms, and feedback) to this proposal.

In your description, address all of the following points:

- What is the process of evidence selection and review?
- What Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards are measured in the review?
- How frequently is the review conducted?
- What are the possible ratings from the review?
- What other parameters govern the review?
- What feedback is provided?
- Who conducts the review?
- What qualifications are necessary to be a reviewer?

- How are they trained and how are their evaluations monitored for continued accuracy?
- What other information would help RIDE understand the instrument(s)?

How are teacher professional responsibilities evaluated in the system? Describe the instrument(s) used and attach copies of the instrument (e.g., directions, rubric, forms, and feedback) to this proposal.

-In your description, address all of the following points:

- What is the process of evidence selection and review?
- What Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards are measured in the review?
- How frequently is the review conducted?
- What are the possible ratings from the review?
- What other parameters govern the review?
- What feedback is provided?
- Who conducts the review?
- What qualifications are necessary to be a reviewer?
- How are they trained and how are their evaluations monitored for continued accuracy?
- What other information would help RIDE understand the instrument(s)?

## Use of Evaluations

### ***Using evaluations to improve instruction***

The *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* provide procedural safeguards to ensure fairness and professional-development plans to enable educators to grow professionally and to improve their effectiveness. This system serves as our new framework for making human-capital decisions.

The evaluation system must provide each educator with specific and actionable feedback on his or her individual performance, including impact on student growth and achievement, and recommendations for professional growth. Once the growth model is in use (~~2013-14~~2016-17), RIDE will provide principals and teachers in tested grades and subjects with reports on their own effect on student growth and achievement in their classrooms or schools as an additional data point for reflection on instructional needs. There is a focus on support and development for every Rhode Island teacher and building administrator at the heart of the educator evaluation now in place in Rhode Island. This commitment is critical to ensuring that educators continuously improve their practice.

Using Race to the Top funds, RIDE ~~is embedding~~embedded the use of educator-evaluation data into every aspect of human-capital management in Rhode Island public schools. The BEP and the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* require that evaluation

systems inform the types of ongoing professional development needed by individual educators and groups of educators. The information generated from evaluations will enable LEAs, principals, and teachers to make better-informed decisions about the specific, most appropriate types of professional development that individual educators need.

~~The integration of educator-evaluation data and the Rhode Island certification database into the Rhode Island longitudinal data system will allow RIDE and the LEAs to track professional-development initiatives. This tracking will allow RIDE to develop information about the efficacy of professional-development providers over time in order to inform future investments, so this tracking will reduce duplication and unnecessary burdens on LEAs and on schools.~~ Rhode Island is still committed to the use of educator evaluation data to inform individual and collective professional development. The Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) allows district and building administrators to run reports in order to identify these needs. ~~RIDE will also implement an online platform for offering, tracking and rating the quality of professional development. Offerings will be tagged to areas of teacher practice and student achievement.~~ The integration of educator-evaluation data and the Rhode Island certification database into the Rhode Island longitudinal data system (Data Hub) in the future will allow RIDE and the LEAs to review reports that connect aggregate student data with educator data plan professional-development initiatives. RIDE will be launching a professional development platform that will allow LEAs and RIDE to post online courses and other professional development offerings. Offerings will be tagged to areas of teacher practice and student achievement. The rating and tracking of professional development will allow RIDE to determine the efficacy of professional-development offerings and providers over time in order to inform future investments. This tracking will reduce duplication and unnecessary burdens on LEAs and on schools. The state and LEAs will have access to information about the quality of professional development offered in order to select the most effective professional development for identified local needs. Finally, the renewal of educator certification is linked to evaluation results. Individuals who receive ratings of Developing or Ineffective complete improvement plans. RIDE audits educators to review the plan of a percentage of these educators as part of the renewal process.

RIDE will allowencourage state and federal dollars to fund only those providers who have a proven track record of improving educator effectiveness. RIDE will also produce reports on the results of different professional-development providers in order to allow LEAs and individual educators to select the most effective professional development for identified local needs.

The Rhode Island Basic Education Program (BEP) requires that LEAs develop systems to assign and promote educators based on evidence of their effectiveness. Going forward, LEAs will use professional-development dollars more efficiently and effectively because our evaluation and support systems will provide specific feedback tied to educator competencies and linked with the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards.

A rigorous, transparent, and fair educator-evaluation system is essential to our commitment to have an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school in Rhode Island. The manner in which RIDE and the LEAs use data from educator evaluations is critical to this effort. Pursuant to the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, LEAs must have in place processes to use evaluation results for the following purposes:

- providing individualized feedback on performance to all teachers, principals, and support professionals, including detailed analysis of their performance (based on student growth) and recommendations for professional growth and development; and,
- supporting continuous professional development and improvement;

Teacher and principal evaluation and support systems in Rhode Island result in differentiated professional development that meets the needs of teachers.

Pursuant to the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, LEAs must have in place processes to use evaluation results for improving performance of ineffective educators by providing intensive support and evaluation specifically designed to improve their performance and dismissing those who are unable or unwilling improve in a timely manner.

Any administrator or teacher who receives a rating of developing or ineffective must have the opportunity to improve. With the support of the evaluator, he or she will create an improvement plan and identify sources of support and training, as well as benchmarks and timelines for improvement. The Rhode Island Model links an educator's evaluation, which identifies strengths and areas for development, with that educator's personal reflection on his or her practice and an individualized Professional Growth Plan.

To develop a Professional Growth Plan, each educator completes a self-assessment at the beginning of the school year, when they reflect on their past performance, consider relevant student learning data, and set professional goals for the upcoming year. Educators use the Professional Practice and Professional Responsibilities Rubrics to identify both strengths and areas for development and to ensure that their goals are aligned with the competencies on which they will be evaluated.

~~Completion of the self-assessment leads to the development of the Professional Growth Plan, containing three concrete Professional Growth Goals, which are the focus of the educator's targeted professional development over the course of the year. Each goal~~Professional Growth Goals must be specific and measurable, with clear benchmarks for success. Support and development vary depending on goals identified by individual educators. All educators participate in ongoing, job-embedded professional development, such as peer observation or participation in a professional learning community, all designed to help them achieve their goals. Collaborative, professional conversation about performance between educators and their evaluators helps educators to improve their practice over the course of the year.

## ***Using evaluations to inform personnel decisions***

Pursuant to the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, LEAs must have in place processes to use evaluation results for the following purposes:

- creating incentives for highly effective educators, including establishing a process to identify individuals or groups of educators who demonstrate exemplary effectiveness and recognize and capitalize on their talents through differentiated roles and responsibilities, formal recognition, or other incentives; and,
- providing objective information to support meaningful renewal and tenure decisions.

To obtain RIDE approval of their educator-evaluation systems, all Rhode Island LEAs must demonstrate that they have processes and policies in place to use data for at least the purposes listed above. LEAs that adopt the Rhode Island Model system must also document how they ~~will~~ use evaluation data for the purposes listed above or adopt model processes and policies recommended by RIDE in these areas. Thus, all Rhode Island LEAs ~~will be using~~ use educator-evaluation data captured from LEA evaluation systems to develop, promote, recognize and reward, renew or retain, assign, and terminate teachers and principals ~~by the 2012-13 school year.~~ The use of the data began in 2012-2013. LEAs continue to develop human capital policies using educator evaluation data.

In order to gain state approval for its evaluation system, each LEA also had to demonstrate that it will use educator-evaluation data to make decisions about promotion into leadership positions (i.e., mentor teacher, grade-level or discipline chair, or, with proper certification, assistant principal, principal, or other equivalent roles). Similarly, principals who demonstrate highly effective performance should be considered for principal-mentor roles and central-office leadership positions. Only those educators who have consistently been rated effective or highly effective on the LEA's educator-evaluation system will be considered by LEAs as eligible for promotion to positions of increased leadership, including transfer of a principal from one school to another. ~~As LEAs develop policies on how they will use information from evaluations to make decisions about promotion, RIDE will monitor the process to ensure that these policies are leading to the establishment of a cadre of highly effective school leaders.~~

RIDE requires LEAs to set ambitious goals for improving teacher and principal effectiveness. It is vital that LEAs also develop targeted goals for developing systems that empower teachers and principals to improve performance, evaluate out ineffective teachers and principals, and assign effective teachers and principals to fill vacancies. These are important steps to strengthen the use of educator-effectiveness data to inform key human-capital management decisions.

Rhode Island believes that differentiated compensation, linked to evidence of effectiveness, can be an important lever in recruiting and retaining the best teachers and principals to improve student achievement. Our Strategic Plan, *Transforming*

*Education in Rhode Island*, indicates that RIDE will lead a collaborative effort to review and analyze research regarding the successful implementation of performance-based compensation systems that districts can adopt by 2015.

Using Race to the Top funds, RIDE ~~will fund~~ two programs through competitive grants to LEAs, multi-LEA collaboratives, or LEA-union partnerships. Two grants were awarded. ~~One award will be granted to study One project focused on the replacement development of steps and lanes a teacher leader pathway while the other has resulted in the redesign of principal compensation schedules with systems that base. RIDE provided consulting support on compensation on evidence of teacher effectiveness. One additional grant will be awarded to develop a system that includes whole-school rewards. In the end, Rhode Island will have two viable models for reform to help these LEAs to adopt or use as guidance for their own design robust new performance-based compensation systems models.~~ RIDE ~~will provide~~ provided consulting support on compensation reform to help these LEAs design robust new performance-based compensation models. ~~In the end, Rhode Island has two viable models for LEAs to adopt or use as guidance for their own compensation systems.~~ Two grants were awarded. ~~One project focuses on the development of a teacher leader pathway while the other has resulted in the redesign of principal compensation.~~

Our evaluation system is designed to enable LEAs to dismiss ineffective teachers and principals after two years of ineffective evaluations. Individuals must receive fair and valid evaluations and opportunities to improve their practice; however, an educator who continues to underperform, as evidenced through the documentation and data from the evaluation system, will be dismissed by the LEA. This does not preclude LEAs from dismissing ineffective teachers and principals before two years, if evidence merits dismissal.

RIDE will also use evaluation data to place into state-sponsored leadership roles only those educators who have had a positive effect on student academic growth and who have demonstrated an ability to lead others to increased measures of success. All state-sponsored educator training and support programs will use effective and highly effective evaluation as an essential, nonnegotiable selection factor. No teacher will be permitted to advance to these state-sponsored leadership roles without achieving effective or highly effective levels on his or her evaluation. Further, to inform state-level policy decisions, we will use this evaluation data over time to understand and document how teachers are being cultivated, supported, assigned, and removed.

Although a single teacher can have a profound impact on student learning over one year, that effect generally diminishes if a student does not have equally effective teachers in subsequent years, with half the gains being lost the following year and nearly all of the gains lost within two years. To ensure that students have continual years of effective teachers, the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* allow Rhode Island to link teacher-effectiveness ratings to the students whom those teachers teach and to identify students who are taught in any year by an ineffective teacher. Under the BEP and the *RI Educator Evaluation Standards*, LEAs must ensure that any student who is

taught by an ineffective teacher in one year is assigned to an effective or highly effective teacher in the next.

~~Using information from the evaluation system and in keeping with assurances in our Race to the Top grant application, RIDE expects LEAs to release teachers and principals after two years of ineffective performance. Because research shows there tends to be a higher concentration of ineffective teachers at high-need schools, LEA action to remove ineffective teachers and principals will relieve schools from ineffective performers and create openings for effective teachers to serve these students.~~

~~Using information from the evaluation system, RIDE will prohibit transfer of ineffective teachers into high-poverty, high-minority schools.~~ The BEP requires LEAs to “address staffing of low-performing schools with highly effective” staff to make up for previous disproportionate staffing of less effective teachers to high-need students. ~~By 2012-13, in order to comply with the RI Educator Evaluation Standards, LEAs cannot assign or transfer any teachers who are not effective or highly effective to high-poverty, high-minority, or low-performing schools.~~ The educator-evaluation data system will enable RIDE to annually monitor whether districts are placing ineffective teachers in such schools. Rhode Island’s Equity Plan will also integrate the use of effectiveness data to build our understanding of any gaps in access to excellent educators and to identify strategies for reducing the equity gaps.

Using information from the evaluation system, RIDE will build principal capacity to hire effective teachers based on mutual consent. RIDE focuses on building the capacity of principals—particularly those in low-performing, high-poverty LEAs—to screen and hire effective applicants. As part of our implementation of the educator-evaluation system, RIDE will provide training for all the principals and superintendents in the state on effective teacher observation and evaluation.

The *RI Educator Evaluation Standards* call for LEAs to provide appropriate levels of support based on evaluation findings. RIDE requires LEAs to report annually on the number of teachers and principals who received evaluations of ineffective, developing, effective, and highly effective; the number of educators terminated annually as a result of “ineffective” evaluations; and the evaluation history of those teachers and principals during their terms of employment with the LEA. This reporting requirement will allow RIDE to ensure that LEAs are in fact dismissing those teachers and principals who repeatedly demonstrate ineffective teaching and to ensure that termination decisions are accurate and fair.

Prior to the adoption of the BEP, Rhode Island had an ambitious and U.S. Department of Education-commended teacher equity plan, focused primarily on the equitable distribution of “highly qualified teachers” based on certification (as defined under NCLB) and other credential measures. Based on research from the field, we understand that these measures are not adequate to ensure that children in high-poverty and high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers. Thus, we will use

our educator-evaluation system standards to monitor and drive action to improve the equitable distribution of and equitable access to teachers and principals. Through our data-management system, we will monitor the distribution of highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective teachers and principals across classrooms, schools, and LEAs, and will use these data as well as component level data to hold LEAs accountable for achieving an equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals with highly effective teachers and principals going to struggling schools and classrooms. RIDE will collect and analyze data on the numbers of highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective teachers and principals at each school in the state; differences between high- and low-poverty and high- and low-minority schools statewide and within each LEA; and differences across different types of teaching assignments (for example, general and AP courses) both statewide and in each LEA and school. Additionally, RIDE will study the experience of teachers and leaders in these settings ~~and~~ monitor the assignments of all educators, ~~as required through our Equitable Distribution Plan.~~

## Continuous Improvement of Evaluation Systems

### *Teacher and principal involvement*

During the first year of implementation, RIDE conducted webinars, drop-in sessions and surveys to gather feedback from educators in the field. RIDE continues to seek input and to respond to concerns from educators regarding the evaluation system, through work groups, a dedicated email account, state-wide surveys and in-person sessions. The Educator Evaluation Committee currently serves as a significant feedback loop for implementation successes and concerns. The Committee includes Superintendents and Principals. Periodically, the committee meets with teacher representation to review possible system changes.

~~RIDE did extensive outreach on evaluation systems~~ RIDE publicizes through the weekly Field Memo and through list-serves, with messages such as this one:

Do you have questions about the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation and don't know where to find answers? Join us for a conversation about implementation of the Rhode Island Model.

We are offering some sessions as drop-in sessions and some in an online webinar. The drop-in sessions do not require registration.

On February 1, 2012, RIDE partnered with the National Education Association – Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals to co-host a webinar for all educators on evaluations and to provide the latest updates on the evaluation system. ~~RIDE continues to hold webinars on evaluations for administrators as well.~~ During ~~the current month (February 2012),~~ RIDE ~~is conducting~~ conducted an online statewide survey for teachers on educator evaluations. The survey ~~asks~~ asked teachers questions about their experiences with the evaluations as well as about their

perspective on evaluation systems in general. Later ~~this~~that month, RIDE ~~will begin~~opened an online survey of principals on educator evaluations. RIDE continued to conduct state-wide surveys during 2013-2014.

In addition, Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist held teacher meetings in every LEA in Rhode Island during the previous (2010-11) school year in order to discuss the evaluation system directly with teachers so as to respond to concerns and to receive feedback. The Commissioner invited all teachers in each LEA to join her at these meetings, and she provided her e-mail address to all teachers in order to respond to follow-up questions as necessary. These meetings were closed to the public in order to allow teachers to express their views frankly to the Commissioner.

Finally, RIDE ~~will receive~~received feedback throughout the ~~current~~2011-2012 school year from the two districts that have agreed to be “early adopters” and to go through full implementation of the Rhode Island Model. RIDE ~~is conducting~~conducted focus groups and surveys of teachers and school leaders to obtain information about the process of full implementation of an educator-evaluation system so as to guide our work going forward toward full implementation in all LEAs during the ~~next~~2012-2013 school year ~~(2012-13).~~ During 2013-2014 ~~an~~additional ~~group was~~groups were established for support professionals, a work group for revisions to building administrator evaluation and a work group for long term planning of evaluation system adjustments. Recommendations for modifications to the support professional models and building administrator models are also in place~~effect~~ for 2014-2015. The Educator Evaluation Advisory Committee is currently reviewing implementation over the past two years to make recommendations for system modifications in 2015-2016. They are considering future modifications to the weights of system components and the scoring approach for all Rhode Island systems.

### ***Feedback received and goals for improvement***

Some of the feedback we have received to date include:

- the paperwork and the time required to complete the beginning-of-the-year components (e.g., self-assessment, professional growth plan, Student Learning Objectives) is a significant concern;
- writing Student Learning Objectives is complicated, especially for special educators;
- the Teacher Professional Practice rubric should be streamlined to eliminate redundancy and to clarify expectations for observable and non-observable areas; ~~and~~
- the current weights don't adequately emphasize the importance of practice; and,
- the evaluation conferences are meaningful and focused on how to improve practice, but preparing for them requires a lot of work.

Some of our goals for incorporating this feedback and improving our evaluations are to:

- increase clarity related to expectations, requirements, and timelines;

- streamline the process and forms to address capacity issues while maintaining a robust model that yields accurate ratings and fosters professional growth- forms have been streamlined to reduce the amount of time on paperwork;
- review rubric competencies to identify redundancy;- practice rubrics have all undergone one round of revisions to eliminate redundancy;
- review the current weights and scoring approaches for the 2015-2016 school year; and,
- examine the number of required professional goals- the number of required goals was reduced.