Rhode Islands Proposed Accountability System – To be formally requested as an amendment to their ESEA Flex Waiver upon receipt of PARCC data and approval of USED.

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 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. 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. 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 current accountability system includes the following features:

- Analyzing state testing data in English Language Arts/Literacy and 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;

- 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,

- Featuring graduation rates prominently within all high schools.

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

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.

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.

iii. "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) gave the public a sense of whether individual schools were making progress in their efforts to improve 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. Large "*n*" sizes and uneven distribution of at-risk populations meant that some schools faced up to four times as many targets as others. The inability of our NCLB accountability system to measure normative achievement gaps or 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 Spring 2015 state assessment results.

RIDE is embracing the opportunity that this flexibility request provides to redesign our accountability framework 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. That original intent is now deeply informed by multiple years of implementation and 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 a roadmap for systemic, sustained improvement that, when coordinated with this waiver extension will help to improve achievement and student outcomes.

The current strategic plan outlined our five-year plan for improving outcomes for all students. The five priorities were:

- Ensure Educator Excellence;
- Accelerate All Schools Toward Greatness;
- Establish World-Class Standards and Assessments;
- Develop User-Friendly Data Systems; and
- 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. 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 of the SEA and local district leadership. 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:

- *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;
- *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;
- *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;
- *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;
- *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;
- *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,
- *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.

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 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 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 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 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 proposing to discontinue the use of "consolidated subgroups" so that we can focus more on the lowest performing group of students in each school regardless of its composition. This change does not diminish our commitment to 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 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 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 unflinching picture of student performance.

(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 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. 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:

- Improve the proficiency of all students in all schools in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics;
- Reduce the percent of students not proficient in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy in half by 2020-21 in all schools and LEAs (All Students);
- Report progress on individualized school-specific and district-specific level Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for all schools in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics for the all student groups and for all subgroups, (race/ethnicity, free/reduced-price lunch, English learners, students with disabilities, lowest 25%). All schools will have AMOs established in the 2014-15 school year using the PARCC assessment results;
- Reduce the number of schools with higher than expected percentages of students with growth 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, students with disabilities);
- Reduce the percent of students not graduating by half by 2020-21, using 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year cohort graduation calculations and set graduation-rate targets (All Students); and,
- 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:

- 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. The PARCC assessments in both content areas report student results in the following categories for all schools: Distinguished Performance (5), Strong Performance (4), Moderate Performance (3), Partial Performance (2), and Minimal Performance (1). Rhode Island transitioned to the PARCC tests this year, 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 take the PARCC 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. InfoWorks will continue to include assessment data, teacher-quality information, and 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 current year for high school or the current year for PARCC are included in the accountability system. EL students arriving after June 30th prior to the testing year are considered newly arrived for testing purposes. Our proposal does request a waiver from including newly arrived ELs (less than one academic year) from the mathematics assessment in the same way they are excluded from the reading assessments as allowed under NCLB. 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). The full academic year is then defined as being enrolled in the same school (or LEA) from October 1 to the end of that 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. 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.
- 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 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 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 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, 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 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 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, and the state's major racial and ethnic subgroups. The AMOs will require each school 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 may be placed into one of RIDEs two lowest accountability levels (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. The 2014-15 classification process held constant those schools previously identified as Priority and Focus Schools.

Using school-specific AMOs as a baseline, Rhode Island's accountability system is based on an index comprised of four metrics. An additional metric, "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 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. Scores will be earned within each of five components. When each of the four weighted components are added together, the result is the schools' and districts' score is out of 100.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the 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 in order to begin the identification process for priority, focus, and commended schools. AMOs will be calculated and reported publicly each year. Schools that miss an AMO for three consecutive years will not be eligible to be classified as a Commended School.

Table 1: ESEA Flexibility Design Weights

Measure	Components	Elementary / Middle Schools	High Schools
Weighted Proficiency Score	All Students	40	40
Closing Gaps in Student Performance	Bottom 25% vs. Top 50%	30	30
Growth	Percent of Students with SGPs less than 35	30	0
HS Graduation Rates	All Students		30
Post-Secondary Credential	All Students	NA	TBD
TOTAL		100	100

The Composite Index Score (CIS) provides sufficient data to place schools and districts into one of five levels so that RIDE can provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and supports. The levels are:

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

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

i. The highest levels of performance reflect current achievement data in each category. They outline achievable yet aspirational goals for each school.

ii. The lowest levels of performance also reflect the current unacceptably low data we have in each category.

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 under our ESEA waiver incorporated many more schools – particularly in our suburbs – to be held accountable for the poor performance of our most vulnerable students; those with disabilities and English 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 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* factor. Further, our data show us that when schools overall performance is low that gaps 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.

How We Measure School Performance
Rhode Island's Proposed Accountability System

Weighted Proficiency Score: How many students are at each performance level beyond the lowest level?

This measure indicates the percent of students in each school at each performance level above Level 1on the state assessments in mathematics and 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, Proficiency continues to play a significant role in our revised ESEA flexibility waiver proposal. It carries a weight of forty percent (40%) in our design. The state administers the PARCC to students in grades 3-8 in math, reading, and writing as well as the English I and English II, Algebra I and Geometry assessments to students in high school when they are enrolled in the related course. The expectation is that all students will reach proficiency. Students who are proficient on the PARCC assessments are on track to be college and career ready.

The PARCC assessments' scale scores and 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 2 below.

Table 2: Performance Levels on the PARCC Assessments

Performance Levels on the PARCC Assessments	
Level	**Description (DRAFT)**
Level	**Distinguished Performance**

5	Students performing at this level demonstrate a **distinguished command** of the knowledge, skill, and practices embodies by the standards. They are academically well prepared to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They are on-track to become academically well prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses without need for remediation.
Level 4	**Strong Performance** 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.
Level 3	**Moderate Performance** Students performing at this level demonstrate a **moderate command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy assessed at their grade level. They will likely need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.
Level 2	**Partial Performance** Students performing at this level demonstrate a **partial command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy assessed at their grade level. They will need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.
Level 1	**Minimal Performance** Students performing at this level demonstrate a **minimal command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy assessed at their grade level. They will need extensive academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.

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

	Level1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Students not in Program	0	.33	.66	1	1
Students in Program*	0	1.25 x .33	1.25 x .66	1.25 x 1	1.25x 1

*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 to125 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 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

	ELEMENTARY			MIDDLE			HIGH		
Group	SCHOOL WIDE	BOTTOM 25%	UPPER 50%	SCHOOL WIDE	BOTTOM 25%	UPPER 50%	SCHOOL WIDE	BOTTOM 25%	UPPER 50%
Am Indian	0.59	1.01	0.41	0.62	1.3	0.36	0.61	0.78	0.46
Asian	3.1	2.14	3.75	2.47	1.49	3.29	3.04	2.12	3.93
Black	7.74	9.13	6.74	6.95	8.76	5.55	9.43	12	8.49
Hispanic	22.19	26.82	19.39	20.92	23.31	19.06	23.36	25.68	20.23

Pac. Islander	0.15	0.14	0.16	0.08	0.17	0.01	0.39	0.43	0.35
White	63.07	57.38	66.62	66.23	61.91	69.33	60.46	56.37	63.72
Multi-Racial	3.16	3.38	2.93	2.72	3.06	2.4	2.71	2.63	2.83
IEP	17.49	39.09	6.47	16.09	40.88	3.26	15.91	38.14	4.21
LEP	8.5	14.66	5.16	5.85	11.51	2.62	4.59	9.25	1.77
Econ. Disadv.	48.29	59.95	40.91	44.79	56.9	37.21	43.53	52.65	37.18

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 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 addressing the lowest performing 25% of students in a school rather than considering student demographic and programmatic group individually, we are able to hold all schools accountable for proficiency gaps – a clear sign to schools that all students matter.

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. This measure examines the scores at the student level in each school and compares each student's scores over consecutive years. 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 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

	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
SGP Range	**Reading**	**Math**	**Reading**	**Math**	**Reading**	**Math**
41 and Above	45	42	45	45	40	40
30-40	120	124	115	112	130	125
29 and Below	59	57	64	69	56	61

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 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 demonstrate significantly lower proportions of low growth even though they may not reach their absolute proficiency targets. Rhode Island will use the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) methodology developed by Damian Bettebenner.[1] 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.

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.

[1] Betebenner, D. W. (2009). Norm-and criterion-referenced student growth. Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 28(4):42–51.

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

	Student Growth Percentile					
	N	Minimum	25 %ile	Median	75 %ile	Maximum
Proficient with Distinction	2,101	1	25	50	75	99
Proficient	4,090	1	25	50	75	99
Partially Proficient	1,721	1	25	50	75	99
Substantially Below Proficient	1,651	1	25	50	75	99

Table: 7 Relationship between 2014 SGP and Student Subgroups

	Student Growth Percentile					
	N	Minimum	25 %ile	Median	75 %ile	Maximum
All Students	29,608	1	25	50	75	99
Minority	10,990	1	25	50	75	99
IEP	4,789	1	20	43	71	99
Poverty	14,544	1	23	47.5	73	99
ELL	2,421	1	24	51	75	99

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.

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:

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.

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 30 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
HS Graduation Rates	< 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 30 (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.

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 five levels in rank order from the highest to lowest CIS. 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.

i. Is student achievement in English Language Arts/Literacy or Mathematics unacceptably low?

ii. Are there intolerable gaps in student performance?

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.

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 particpation 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 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 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.

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 expected distribution projects that RIDE will continue to have the ability to differentiate among the breadth of performance across all Rhode Island schools.

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 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 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 PARCC 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 PARCC

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.

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 analyses of student outcomes, including absolute performance, in addition to growth and gap reduction, 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.