December 21, 2023

The Honorable Angelica Infante-Green
Commissioner of Education
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903-3400

Dear Commissioner Infante-Green:

I am writing in response to Rhode Island's November 14, 2023, request to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Prior to implementing any revisions to its approved consolidated State plan, a State must submit its proposed amendments to the Department for review and approval.

I have determined that the amendment request meets ESEA requirements; accordingly, I am approving Rhode Island's amended State plan. A summary of Rhode Island's amendment is enclosed. This letter, as well as Rhode Island's revised ESEA consolidated State plan, will be posted on the Department's website. Any further requests to amend Rhode Island's ESEA consolidated State plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval.

Please be aware that approval of this amendment is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is Rhode Island's responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

Thank you for the work Rhode Island has invested in its consolidated State plan under the ESEA. If you need any assistance regarding its implementation, please contact the Office of School Support and Accountability at: OESE.Titlei-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Adam Schott
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure
cc: Scott Gausland, Rachel Peterson, Kelvin Roldán, RIDE

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202

http://www.ed.gov/

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Amendment to the Rhode Island Consolidated State Plan
The following is a summary of Rhode Island's amendment request. Please refer to the Department's website https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-consolidated-state-plans/ for Rhode Island's complete consolidated State plan.

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- *Native Language Assessments*
  The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) updated its ESEA consolidated State plan to reflect the assessments currently offered in languages other than English, (*i.e.,* the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS); mathematics assessments in grades 3-8; and the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA) in grades 5, 8, and 11).

- *Long Term Goals*
  RIDE revised its baseline data to use data from the 2017-2018 school year for its measurements of interim progress and long-term goals for academic achievement because it transitioned to new statewide summative assessments starting that school year.

  The Department acknowledges that RIDE shifted forward its long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for academic achievement, graduation rate, and progress in achieving English language proficiency (ELP) by two years (from 2025 to 2027), consistent with its previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum.

- *Academic Achievement Indicator*
  For its Academic Achievement indicator, RIDE revised the cut scores for a school to earn one to four points because it transitioned to new statewide summative assessments during the 2017-2018 school year (e.g., previously, a school earned three points for a proficiency rate between 73 and 78 percent; now, a school will receive three points for a proficiency rate between 68 and 75 percent).

  For its student growth measure for high schools, RIDE revised the cut scores on its student growth index that are used to award a school between one and three points, using new baseline data from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

- *Other Academic Indicator for Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools*
  RIDE revised the cut scores on its Other Academic indicator for Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools that are used to award a school between one and three points on its student growth index, using new baseline data from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

- *Graduation Rate Indicator*
  RIDE uses the four-year adjusted-cohort graduation rate (ACGR) as well as a composite graduation rate that uses the four-, five-, and six-year ACGR. RIDE clarified how the indicator will be calculated for schools that do not have a five- or six-year ACGR.

- *Progress in Achieving ELP Indicator*
  For its Progress in Achieving ELP indicator, RIDE changed the composite proficiency level from 5.0 to 4.8 on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment.

  Second, RIDE revised its indicator to include students who take the alternate ACCESS assessment. A school will earn points on the indicator based on a student's progress toward reaching proficiency on the alternative assessment (*i.e.,* a Level P2 or a composite scale score of 944).

  Finally, RIDE made adjustments to the cut scores it will use to determine a school's points (from one to four) on the indicator for each grade span (*i.e.,* elementary, middle/high school, K-8, and K-12 schools).

- *School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) Indicator – Exceeds Expectations*
  RIDE revised the cut scores for its Exceeds Expectations SQSS indicator because it transitioned to new statewide summative assessments during the 2017-2018 school year. RIDE modified the cut scores such that a school receives one point on the indicator if fewer than two percent of its students exceed expectations (*i.e.,* achieved Level 4 on the statewide assessment); receives two points if between 2 and 10 percent of students exceed expectations; and receives three points if 10 percent or more of students exceed expectations.

- *SQSS Indicator – Student Chronic Absenteeism*
  For its Student Chronic Absenteeism SQSS indicator, RIDE defines chronic absenteeism as any student who is absent more than 10 percent of school days out of the total days enrolled. RIDE adjusted the cut scores for how schools earn points to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2022-2023 school year only, RIDE will award one point to any school with 30 percent or more students chronically absent or if the school reports no data, two points to a school with a chronically absent rate between 15 and 30 percent, and three points to a school with a chronic absenteeism rate below 15 percent. In addition, RIDE removed pre-kindergarten from this indicator and established new cut scores for schools with nonstandard grade spans.

- *SQSS Indicator – Teacher Chronic Absenteeism*
  For its SQSS indicator Teacher Chronic Absenteeism, RIDE defines absenteeism as any teacher who is absent more than 10 percent of school days in a given year. RIDE clarified that it will calculate this indicator using the percentage of chronically absent teachers assigned to students in grades PK-12 for the full school rather than individual courses, and that it will report data for schools with at least 10 teachers and include the indicator in accountability determinations for schools with at least 20 teachers.

  In addition, RIDE evaluated data from the 2017-2018 school year and updated its cut scores. Specifically, a school that has a teacher chronic absenteeism rate of more than 10 percent or does not report data will earn one point, a school with teacher chronic absenteeism rates between 5 and 10 percent will earn two points, and a school with a teacher chronic absenteeism rate below five percent will earn three points.

Finally, due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, RIDE also increased the cut scores for this indicator using data from the 2022-2023 school year only (e.g., a school with teacher absenteeism of less than 10 percent will receive three points only for accountability determinations based on data from the 2022-2023 school year).

- *SQSS Indicator – Commissioner's Seal*
  RIDE renamed its "High School Graduate Proficiency" indicator as the "Commissioner's Seal" and clarified calculation procedures. Any student who reaches proficiency on at least one R/LA and one mathematics assessment, as defined by the performance standard outlined in the ESEA consolidated State plan, on a college and career readiness assessment will earn one point. RIDE also established cut scores for awarding between one and three points to each school (e.g., a school that has over 75 percent of its students meeting the performance standards on both R/LA and mathematics will earn three points).

  In its approved ESEA consolidated State plan, RIDE indicated it will calculate the denominator for this indicator using all graduates, rather than all students. RIDE must submit an amendment to its ESEA consolidated State plan so that, for accountability determinations based on data from the 2023-2024 and future school years, the denominator for the indicator will be all students (e.g., all 12th graders or the denominator used for the ACGR), consistent with statutory requirements.

- *SQSS Indicator – Post-Secondary Success*
  RIDE updated its Post-Secondary Success SQSS indicator for how a student earns points (*i.e.,* a student will be awarded one point if the student earns a diploma and one recognized credential, 1.1 points if the student earns two credentials, and 1.2 points if the student earns three or more credentials). Total points are then divided by the total number of graduates in that reporting year and the school will be assigned between one and three points using RIDE's established cut scores (e.g., an index of less than 40 percent will earn one point on this indicator).

  In its approved ESEA consolidated State plan, RIDE indicated it will calculate the denominator for this indicator using all graduates, rather than all students. RIDE must submit an amendment to its ESEA consolidated State plan so that, for accountability determinations based on data from the 2023-2024 school year, the denominator for the indicator will be all students (e.g., all 12th graders or the denominator used for the ACGR), consistent with statutory requirements.

- *SQSS Indicator – Science Proficiency*
  RIDE updated its ESEA consolidated State plan to include a science proficiency indicator based on the NGSA and Dynamic Learning Maps State science assessments in grades 5, 8, and 11. RIDE will calculate a performance index; students who are proficient will earn one point and students who score below proficient will earn one-third of a point. Schools can earn one to three points for this indicator. A school with an index score of at least 68 will earn three points and a school with an index score of less than 40 will earn one point.

- *Annual Meaningful Differentiation (AMD)/Weighting*
  RIDE updated its system of AMD to include its Science proficiency, Commissioner's Seal, and Post-Secondary Success SQSS indicators. For schools that do not meet the minimum n-size for an indicator, RIDE clarified that it will include up to three years of data to meet the minimum n-size for an indicator or subgroup. However, for the 2023-2024 school year, RIDE will not include additional years of data to most accountability indicators for schools and student groups that do not meet the minimum n-size given the impact of COVID-19 on previous years' data.

- *Alternate Methodology*
  RIDE clarified that it will apply individual student mapping for early grade schools in its accountability system for purposes of the Academic Achievement, Exceeds Expectations, and Science Proficiency indicators.

  RIDE will continue to include all available indicators (e.g., its Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency, Student Chronic Absenteeism, Teacher Chronic Absenteeism, and Student Suspension indicators) in its accountability determinations for these schools and report all available indicators in the same manner as it does for other schools on its State and local report cards.

- *Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) – Lowest Performing and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)*
  RIDE updated its methodology for identifying the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools for CSI to include the Commissioner's Seal, Post-Secondary Success, and Science proficiency SQSS indicators. RIDE also made conforming edits to its methodology for identifying schools for ATSI to be consistent with its revised CSI methodology.

- *Frequency of Identification – CSI*
  RIDE changed its timeline for identifying CSI schools from annual to biannual. RIDE identified its CSI schools in school year 2022-2023 and will next identify schools for CSI in school year 2024-2025.

- *CSI Exit Criteria*
  RIDE revised its exit criteria for schools identified for CSI based on low performance to include demonstrating proficiency on the Science assessments as a criterion for exiting CSI status. Schools identified for CSI will continue to have four years to meet the State-determined exit criteria specific to their reason for identification. For schools identified for CSI in fall 2022, RIDE will assess whether a school is eligible to exit every two years. The Department acknowledges that, consistent with its previously approved COVID-19 State Plan Addendum for the 2021-2022 school year, RIDE did not count the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years toward the number of years in which a school must meet the exit criteria in order to be exited from CSI status.

- *School Conditions*
  RIDE removed its description of using different data on school suspensions to track improvements in school climate from its list of strategies to improve schools' conditions for student learning.