

LEA Turnaround Review Standards and Indicators

Standards and Indicators for the review process pursuant to
R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5 and 200-RICR-20-05-6

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RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

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Introduction

Statutory and Regulatory Context

In 2022, the Rhode Island General Assembly mandated that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (Council) promulgate regulations pursuant to R.I. Gen. Law § [16-7.1-5.1](#). In February 2024, the Council formally promulgated the statewide regulations [200-RICR-20-05-6](#) that provide the criteria and a procedure for determining the end of turnaround status for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) subject to intervention and support pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5, and to return control over the operation of such LEAs from the Council back to the local school board or committee. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) developed these regulations with the consultation of educational experts and best practices from Massachusetts and other states.

[200-RICR-20-05-6](#) requires the Commissioner to craft a report to be delivered to the Council prior to the end of any order under R.I. Gen. Law § 16-7.1-5 to inform the Commissioner's recommendation to the Council on the continuation or expiration of an LEA's turnaround status.

The report includes an analysis of two key conditions, contextualized in comparison to other LEAs as well as the underlying factors for which an LEA was originally placed in turnaround status:

- 1) Progress: The degree an LEA has made sufficient progress towards achieving the academic and other progress measures identified within the LEA's Turnaround Plan; as well as,
- 2) Capacity: If the LEA, school committee, and responsible municipal entity possess the capacity and readiness to sustain the LEA's progress if the LEA was returned to local control.

The review of these two conditions should provide a helpful framework to identify clear progress made to date, as well as identify potential areas of support to continue to sustain and accelerate progress going forward.

Overview of the Turnaround Review Standards Document and Purpose

The standards and their related indicators outlined below in this document will serve as a framework to assess and identify areas of improvement as it pertains to LEA progress, LEA capacity, school committee capacity, and municipal capacity, for LEAs subject to state intervention. A common theme noted by practitioners was the desire for review standards and processes focused on support rather than compliance. RIDE envisions this review standards document providing a useful framework for accurately gauging where support in an LEA is most needed.

The LEA Review Standards were developed with external, expert guidance Dr. Kenneth Wong, the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair for Education Policy at Brown University.

These standards were developed after a thorough review of best practices from Massachusetts and other states, as well as RIDE's own Basic Education Program (BEP).

In the development of these standards, RIDE leveraged Rhode Island [Basic Education Program](#) which currently outlines 7 "core functions" that each LEA is responsible for carrying out. These core functions helped inform these standards and indicators, particularly in the LEA capacity section below. RIDE also consulted statutes related to school governance.

Organization of Document

This document has four main sections detailing the standards and indicators to be used to assess an LEA's status and determine the ability of an LEA to return to local control. Each section has a list of standards and corresponding indicators of successful practice. Below is an outline of the document with the accompanying standards for each section:

Section	Review Standards
Section 1: LEA Performance	1.1) Makes sufficient progress on academic and other academic progress measures within the LEA's turnaround plan
Section 2: LEA Capacity (Aligned to BEP's Core Essential Functions)	2.1) Leads the Focus on Learning and Achievement. 2.2) Recruits, Supports, and Retains Highly Effective Staff. 2.3) Implements rigorous curriculum and instruction. 2.4) Uses Information for Planning and Accountability. 2.5) Engages Families and the Community. 2.6) Fosters Safe and Supportive Environments for Students and Staff. 2.7) Ensures Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources.
Section 3: School Committee Capacity	3.1) Focuses on improvement 3.2) Establishes a culture of collaboration 3.3) Fulfills legal and fiduciary responsibilities as defined in Rhode Island state law
Section 4: Municipal Entity Capacity	4.1) Ensures Fiscal and Legal Compliance 4.2) Demonstrates Community Leadership

In each of these sections, an introduction and explanation of background context for these standards and indicators will be given. Then, for each standard, the corresponding indicators will be detailed to demonstrate what evidence of effective practice of each standard looks like for an LEA or relevant local governing entity.

Section 1: LEA Performance Metric Progress

Overview

Each LEA under an order pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § [16-7.1-5.1](#) is mandated to create a Turnaround Action Plan. This plan is to be used to set goals for the LEA under state intervention and provide a framework to assess progress during the course of turnaround status. The Turnaround Action Plan (TAP) includes performance metrics that will guide the Commissioner in their report and recommendation on the turnaround status of the LEA. Assessing the performance of an LEA and the progress made during turnaround status is paramount to deciding whether and when to return an LEA to local control. This evaluation should be inclusive of the root causes and context surrounding LEA performance metric progress that contributed to the LEA entering turnaround status.

Regulatory and Statutory Context:

[200-RICR-20-05-6](#) requires that each Turnaround Plan contain academic and non-academic progress measures within an LEA's turnaround plan. The progress measures must, at a minimum:

- a. Be customized to the particular reasons for which the LEA was first entered into turnaround status under the Crowley Act;
- b. Be informed by input from community and other stakeholder engagement that helped inform the creation of the turnaround plan;
- c. Include academic measures that align to relevant components of the local education agency accountability system, as identified in R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-97.1-1; and,
- d. Include any additional progress measures identified for specific LEAs pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5.1.

Other non-academic progress measures may include the successful completion of implementation milestones that address root causes that contributed to the LEA entering turnaround status.

Standards for Review:

Standard #1.1: The LEA has made sufficient progress on measurable goals specified in the LEA's turnaround action plan.

- 1.1.1 The LEA has made sufficient progress on academic progress measures as outlined in the LEA's turnaround plan
- 1.1.2 The LEA has made sufficient progress on non-academic progress measures as outlined in the LEA's turnaround plan

This standard should include an assessment to the degree that the LEA has made sufficient progress for each of the progress measures (academic and non-academic) within the LEA's turnaround plan. Given each LEA's turnaround plan will be uniquely structured with goals relevant to the LEA's specific context, the analysis of the degree to which progress measures have been met may be clustered by specific themes or groupings within the LEA's context plan. For example, if the turnaround plan has non-academic progress measures pertaining to human capital, the assessment of progress may also include a holistic evaluation of the progress made within the overall grouping of human capital nonacademic progress measures.

This assessment should also be contextualized in comparison with the LEA's performance on these measures to similar LEAs, the LEA's initial performance prior to the intervention, and in light of potential external factors impacting performance. In particular, given the detrimental effects of the pandemic on learning, as well documented in studies on learning loss and recovery, the review of academic related progress measures should consider the trajectory of the LEA relative to other similar LEAs in terms of learning recovery.



Section 2: LEA Capacity

Overview

An LEA's responsibility, as noted in the BEP [200-RICR-20-10-1.1.4\(A\)\(1\)](#), is "to create and sustain high quality learning environments that meet the standards set forth in the BEP. In these regulations, the LEA includes the governing board, central-level, and school-level personnel. The LEA shall ensure that learning is at all times the ultimate focus of every individual employed by the agency." This guiding principle of an LEA's responsibility informs the standards and indicators outlined in the section below.

LEA capacity is to be assessed using seven main standards, derived from the seven core functions of an LEA as stated in the BEP, and their applicable indicators below. For each standard, an accompaniment of indicators describes what effective LEA capacity practices look like in practice. Based upon the below regulations, and in consultation with national standards, RIGL, and best-practices, RIDE developed the following key standards and indicators to assess LEA capacity. This evaluation should be inclusive of the root causes and context surrounding LEA capacity that contributed to the LEA entering turnaround status.

Statutory and Regulatory Context:

An LEA under turnaround status, as noted in [200-RICR-20-05-6](#) is subject to review and consideration by the Commissioner regarding if the LEA has the capacity and readiness to continue to make progress on the academic and other progress measures, as identified within the LEA's turnaround plan, without the intervention and support provided pursuant to in R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5.

Standards for Review:

Standard #2.1: Leads the Focus on Learning and Achievement

The LEA provides on-site direction that continuously guides site-based leadership; identifies expectations and accountability for implementation of proven practices; and addresses barriers to implementation of identified educational goals.

- 2.1.1. LEA and School Leadership:** The superintendent promotes a culture of collaboration, trust, accountability, and joint responsibility for student learning among administrators, teachers, and other staff members. The superintendent engages with the school committee and the community to support LEA improvement.
- 2.1.2. LEA and School Improvement Planning:** Using a clear, thoughtful, and inclusive process, the LEA develops a three- to five-year LEA improvement plan, strategic plan, or LEA strategy and an annual LEA action plan, and each school develops an annual school improvement plan aligned with the LEA's plan. The plans drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices.
- 2.1.3. Tiered Systems of Support:** The LEA has a proactive approach and system designed to meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools use data-driven decision making, progress monitoring, and evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth.

Standard #2.2: Recruits, Supports, and Retains 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.

- 1.1.3 Infrastructure: The LEA employs effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices.
- 1.1.4 Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment: The LEA proactively cultivates a pipeline of educators such that there is a qualified pool of applicants for all vacancies. It has hiring timelines, policies, and processes which are rigorous and efficient such that schools are able to employ effective educators. The LEA has developed systems and processes to identify and address equitable access to excellent educators.
- 1.1.5 Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development: The LEA ensures that supervision and evaluation inform a comprehensive approach to the identification, development, and retention of effective educators. It ensures that educators at all stages of their careers receive appropriately targeted and differentiated professional development that improves their knowledge, skills, and ability to meet the learning needs of all students. The LEA provides high-quality induction and mentoring support to all new hires such that it can develop, support, and retain effective educators.
- 1.1.6 Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement. The LEA provides differentiated roles and opportunities for growth, including distributed leadership opportunities and an articulated career ladder, such that it can effectively build leadership skills and retain effective professional staff and maximize their impact.

Standard #2.3: Implements high quality curriculum materials and instruction

Curriculum and instruction are supported by data-driven instructional strategies, job-embedded professional development, culturally responsive practice, and formative and summative assessment.

- 2.3.1 Curriculum Selection and Use. The LEA ensures that all teachers have access to standards aligned curricular materials that meet the definitions of high-quality curriculum as set forth by RIGL §§ 16-22-30 through 33, Rhode Island's List of Approved High-Quality Curricula, and Review Tools to Support Selection of HQCM, and the support needed to implement those materials consistently and skillfully.
- 2.3.2 Classroom Instruction: The LEA ensures that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
- 3.3.3. Student Access to Coursework. The LEA ensures that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework.

Standard #2.4: Uses 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.

- 2.4.1 Data and Assessment Systems: The LEA has a clear purpose and system for reviewing state-level data and efficiently collecting LEA and school level assessment and outcome data.
- 2.4.2 Data Use: The LEA fosters a culture of data use to drive continuous improvement at all levels and ensures that educators, including LEA and school leaders, use collected data to guide instructional practice.
- 2.4.3 Sharing Results: The LEA shares assessment results with students, teachers, and students' families in ways that are clear, timely, and easily understood and utilized.

Standard #2.5: Engages 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.

- 2.5.1 Student and Family Engagement: The LEA ensures that each school develops strong collaborative relationships with students and families in order to support students' academic progress and behavioral, social, emotional, and physical development and well-being.
- 2.5.2 Community and Partner Engagement: The LEA ensures that each school develops strong collaborative relationships with community partners and other stakeholders in order to support students' academic progress and behavioral, social, emotional, and physical development and well-being.

Standard #2.6: Fosters 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.

- 2.6.1 Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture: The LEA prioritizes the physical, intellectual, and emotional safety of all students and adults, and creates an environment that helps students develop social, emotional, and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies. It supports schools to foster safe, positive, healthy, inclusive, engaging, and welcoming learning environments that cultivate supportive, authentic relationships and a strong sense of belonging and connection, and that value the diverse assets and voices of all students, staff, families, and partners.
- 2.6.2 Healthy, Welcoming, and Inclusive Spaces: The school facilities -- consisting of the site, building, equipment, and utilities -- are major factors in the functioning of the educational program.

Standard #2.7: Ensures 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.

- 2.7.1 Budget Development: The LEA's budget recommendations to the school committee are educationally sound and address the goals and strategies of the LEA's improvement plans, benchmarking data available from RIDE and elsewhere, and analysis of disaggregated student data.
- 2.7.2 Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits: The LEA provides regular, accurate reports to the superintendent and school committee on spending from all funding sources, and forecasts spending through the end of the year, with adequate school-level information provided to every principal.
- 2.7.3 Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance: The LEA shall prepare a long-range Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP), with annual revisions and updates that address all facilities under the control of the LEA and that is aligned with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The LEA shall develop methods and procedures to coordinate their facility planning with local governments and related comprehensive community plans. The LEA shall develop a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP) with annual revisions and updates, using the template provided in the School Housing Aid and School Construction Regulations.

2.7.4 Human Capital: Each LEA shall develop, implement, and monitor a human capital management system that is connected to its educational improvement strategy, and supports the people with the knowledge and skills necessary to execute that strategy. Human capital management systems shall adhere to standards and state regulations that relate to professional knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of all staff.



Section 3: School Committee Capacity

Overview

School committees play a critical governance role in collaboratively and strategically supporting the LEA to improve student performance and outcomes. High-functioning school committees should establish, implement, and evaluate policies, procedures, systems, and budgets with a primary focus on achieving LEA wide improvement goals, in part through equitable and effective use of resources.

Given a school committee's advisory role while an LEA is under state control pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5.1, the standards below are meant to evaluate the school committee's readiness and capacity to assume their critical governance role should the LEA return from state to local control. This evaluation should be inclusive of the root causes and context regarding school committee capacity that contributed to the LEA entering turnaround status.

Regulatory and Statutory Context

In reviewing the capacity of the school committee or board to support the respective LEA, [200-RICR-20-05-6](#) requires review and consideration regarding the school board or committee's capacity and readiness to:

- a. support the LEA's continued progress on academic and other progress measures, as identified within the LEA's turnaround plan, without the intervention and support provided pursuant to the Crowley Act; and,
- b. provide said support consistent with responsibilities outlined in R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-9, as well as other site-based management and governance best practices.

Standards for Review:

Standard #3.1: The School Committee Focuses on Improving Outcomes for Students

- 3.1.1 Turnaround Plan: The LEA shall purposefully and collectively use the LEA's turnaround plan to guide its policies, deliberations, and decisions
- 3.1.2 Data: Regularly reviews disaggregated student data
- 3.1.3 Focus on Closing Achievement Gaps: Maintains a particular focus on closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, low-income students, multilingual learners, and differently-abled students
- 3.1.4 Performance Evaluation: As applicable, demonstrates the capacity and readiness to evaluate the superintendent's performance annually

Standard #3.2: The School Committee Establishes a Culture of Collaboration

- 3.2.1 Collaborative Relationships: Ensures that members develop and sustain a collaborative working relationship with each other and with the superintendent
- 3.2.2 Stakeholder Engagement: Actively creates opportunities to engage stakeholders in working together in a transparent way to improve student outcomes
- 3.2.3 Positive Working Relationships: Promotes positive working relationships between LEA, municipal, and state leaders

- 3.2.4 Meaningful Student Input: Provides opportunities for students to share meaningful input into policies and decision-making as appropriate

Standard #3.3: The Schol Committee fulfills legal and fiduciary responsibilities as defined in Rhode Island state law.

- 3.3.1. Focus on LEA Improvement: In accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-9, and as applicable under R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-1, establishes priorities, goals policies, procedures, systems, and budgets to enable LEA-wide improvement
- 3.3.2 Site-Based Management: Demonstrates the capacity and readiness to resume operations with transparency and maintain a clear and appropriate division of roles between municipal officials, the committee, the superintendent, and LEA staff, in accordance with site-based management best-practices.
- 3.3.3 Appropriate Roles within the School Committee: Demonstrates the capacity and readiness to resume the adoption of appropriate division of roles among members of the school committee to ensure that the committee is a highly functional, strategic policy making body for the LEA as a whole
- 3.3.4 Funding: Demonstrates the capacity and readiness to resume taking responsibility for securing adequate and equitable funding for the LEA
- 3.3.5 Financial Management: Demonstrates the capacity and readiness to resume prudent financial management and spending in accordance with the budget it has approved
- 3.3.6 Negotiations: As applicable, the school committee or board will demonstrate the capacity to resume an active and constructive role in developing timely and effective strategies for collective bargaining and managing negotiations
- 3.3.7 Addresses Deficiencies: Addresses any additional school-committee based deficiencies identified in the underlying analysis that contributed to a LEA to coming under state control pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5.

Section 4: Municipal-Entity Capacity

Overview:

Municipal leadership encompasses the collective aspirations of the quality of public education as a key aspect of the wellbeing of the local community. Municipal leaders collaborate strategically with the School Committee and the LEA Leadership to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. Municipal capacity should be shown to provide resources to ensure students receive high quality education.

Based upon the below regulations, and in consultation with national standards, RIGL, and best-practices, RIDE developed the following key standards and indicators to assess municipal entity capacity. This evaluation should be inclusive of the root causes and context surrounding municipal capacity that contributed to the LEA entering turnaround status.

Regulatory Context:

[200-RICR-20-05-6](#) requires review and consideration regarding if the legally responsible municipal entity has the capacity and readiness to:

- a) support the LEA's school committee or board to ensure the LEA's continued progress on academic and other progress measures, as identified within the LEA's turnaround plan, without the intervention and support provided pursuant to the Crowley Act; and,
- b) demonstrate said support through the contribution of sufficient local funding to the local school committee or board necessary to sustain and continue the LEA's progress, including compliance with statutory maintenance of effort requirements as identified in the Crowley Act.

Standards for Review:

Standard #4.1: Ensure Fiscal and Legal Compliance

The municipal entity fulfills its fiscal and legal responsibilities, in accordance with RI state law and regulations, to support the success of the LEA.

- 4.1.1** Equitable Funding: Takes action to secure adequate, equitable funding for the LEA and its schools, as stipulated by the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provision in the Crowley Act, RI State Law and the annual state appropriations in the school funding formula, as applicable.
- 4.1.2** School Committee Member Recruitment: Where application under RI State Law and Municipal Charter, recruits qualified candidates to serve on the School Committee.
- 4.1.3** Collective Bargaining: As permissible by RI State Law, takes an appropriate and responsible role in the process of collective bargaining.

Standard #4.2: Demonstrates Community Leadership

The municipal entity demonstrates value-add leadership in galvanizing community and municipal assets to effectively support and collaborate with the LEA.

- 4.2.1 Community Partnerships: Convenes and leverages community partnerships and assets to support learning opportunities for all students in the community.
- 4.2.2 Effective Collaboration: Effectively collaborates with and makes available to the LEA, where applicable, facilities, municipal supports and systems of operations and finance in support of the LEA's school improvement effort.
- 4.2.3 Appropriate Division of Roles: As applicable, adopts appropriate division of roles between municipal officials, the school committee, and LEA leadership.
- 4.2.4 Addresses Deficiencies: Addresses any additional municipal-based deficiencies identified in the underlying analysis that contributed to a LEA to coming under state control pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5.

