

Acknowledgments

The work of the Rhode Island Urban Education Task Force would not have been possible without the generous financial contributions of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and the Rhode Island Foundation. We are also grateful to the Wallace Foundation and Bank of America for their support.

We extend our sincere thanks to the following people for their dedication in steering the work of the Task Force: Janet Durfee-Hidalgo, Rhode Island Governor's Office; David Abbott, Rhode Island Department of Education; Warren Simmons, Ellen Foley, Michael Grady, and David Sigler, Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University; Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT; and Patrick McGuigan, the Providence Plan.

Several Task Force members served as working group chairs, volunteering additional time and energy to develop the recommendations and action steps. We thank Tom Brady and Sharon Contreras, Providence Public Schools; Sarah Cahill, Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance; Rosanna Castro, formerly of Brown University; John Simmons, Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council; and Ron Wolk, the Big Picture Company. Elaine Budish, RI KIDS COUNT, and Elizabeth Jardine, Rhode Island Department of Education, stepped in to chair the Multiple Pathways working group when their chair made a transition.

Many local leaders participated in working groups and in Task Force meetings, adding considerable expertise and needed perspectives. While they are too numerous to mention here, we have listed them in appendix A1. We are grateful for their support and input.

Our National Advisory Panel was made up of some of the best minds working in education reform today, including Barnett Berry, Center

for Teaching Quality; Rick Hess, American Enterprise Institute; Milbrey McLaughlin, Stanford University; Charles Payne, University of Chicago; Jesse Register, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools; and Paul Reville, Massachusetts Department of Education.

We received research support from the member organizations in the Research Collaborative; particular thanks to Elaine Budish of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, who developed the statistical profiles of each of the Task Force cities, and Rebecca Lee of the Providence Plan, who analyzed data on student mobility. Several other individuals and organizations provided analysis and support: Young Voices developed and analyzed a survey of students in Pawtucket and Central Falls. Students from Brown's Taubman Center and Urban Education Policy Program, including Nick Vockerodt, Steven Glass, James Huang, Stefanie Mach, and Priya Mahajan, attended meetings, gave feedback, and conducted analyses.

Staff of the Annenberg Institute dedicated themselves to the work of the Task Force. Carol Walker provided thorough and efficient administrative support, organizing the many events and meetings. Kathy Hardie managed the chair's schedule. Margaret Balch-Gonzalez and Tracie Potochnik provided valuable staff support to the working groups. Susan Fisher, Margaret-Balch Gonzalez, Mary Arkins, and Haewon Kim edited, designed, and published the preliminary and final reports. Amy Rittenhouse designed the Web site.

Elliot Krieger, Rhode Island Department of Education; Amy Kempe, Governor's Office; and Al Dahlberg, Brown University, provided valuable communications advice to the Task Force.

Several organizations partnered with the Task Force to develop community and constituent forums. We thank the Rhode Island Young Professionals, an auxiliary of the Urban League of Rhode Island; the Providence Public Schools; NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley; the Woonsocket After School Coalition, the Woonsocket Education Department, and the Woonsocket Parent Advisory Council; CHisPA and Progreso Latino; the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals; the Central Falls Teachers' Union, the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, the Providence Teachers Union, and the Woonsocket Teachers Guild; and the Newport Public Education Foundation, the Alliance for a Livable Newport, and the Newport Public Schools.

Jonny Skye Njie, Ina Anderson, Erika Read, and Tehani Collazo played an important role in designing and organizing the community forums. Students who were part of the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation's Tune-In Youth Media Group, Scott Lapham, students from RiverzEdge Arts Project in Woonsocket, and Victor Ramos skillfully produced videos and photos documenting three of the forums. And we are deeply grateful to the more than 450 people who attended the community forums, provided feedback, and participated in our deliberations.

The new Commissioner of Education, Deborah Gist, arrived at a point in our process when most of the recommendations had been completed. Still, she took part in our final Task Force meeting, engaged in the material deeply, and provided thoughtful comments. We thank her for her recent participation and for her future leadership in the critical areas we have identified in the report.

Finally, the Task Force wishes to thank Governor Donald L. Carcieri for his vision of developing a statewide solution to the challenges of

urban education in Rhode Island. We were honored to be part of the process to develop an agenda for urban education in our beloved state; now we commit ourselves to supporting the implementation of the ideas herein.

Members of the Rhode Island Urban Education Task Force

John H. Ambrogi

Superintendent

Newport Public Schools

Chace Baptista

Co-Director

Young Voices

David Beauchesne

Director, Education and Community Partnerships

Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra and
Music School

Thomas Brady

Superintendent

Providence Public Schools

Elizabeth Burke Bryant

Executive Director

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Sarah Cahill

Executive Director

Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance

Anna Cano-Morales

Senior Community Philanthropy Officer

The Rhode Island Foundation

Robert Carothers

Former President

University of Rhode Island

Rosanna Castro

Former Member

Providence School Board

Sharon Contreras

Chief Academic Officer

Providence Public Schools

Angus Davis

Member

Rhode Island Board of Regents for
Elementary and Secondary Education

Hans Dellith

Superintendent

Pawtucket Public Schools

Richard DiPardo

President

Woonsocket Teachers Union

Ray DiPasquale

President

Community College of Rhode Island

Roger Eldridge

Interim Dean

Rhode Island College

Donnie W. Evans

Former Superintendent

Providence Public Schools

Robert Flanders, Jr.

Chairman

Rhode Island Board of Regents for
Elementary and Secondary Education

Gordon Fox

State Representative and House Majority Leader

Rhode Island General Assembly

(represented by Beth Cotter)

Sarah Friedman

Director

The Learning Community Charter School

Jo Eva Gaines

Chairperson

Newport School Board

Frances Gallo <i>Superintendent</i> Central Falls School District	Rev. William Shaw <i>President</i> Ministers Alliance of Rhode Island
Robert Gerardi <i>Superintendent</i> Woonsocket Education Department	Warren Simmons, Chair <i>Executive Director</i> Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University
Patrick McGuigan <i>Executive Director</i> The Providence Plan	John Simmons <i>Executive Director</i> Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council
Peter McWalters <i>Former Commissioner of Education</i> Rhode Island Department of Education	Steven Smith <i>State Representative</i> Rhode Island General Assembly
Brandon Melton <i>Senior Vice President</i> Lifespan Corporate Offices	Paul Sproll <i>Professor and Department Head, Art and Design Education</i> Rhode Island School of Design
Teresa Paiva Weed <i>President of the Senate</i> Rhode Island General Assembly <i>(represented by Robert Kalaskowski)</i>	O. Rogeriee Thompson <i>Associate Justice</i> Washington County Superior Court
Lawrence Purtill <i>President</i> National Education Association/Rhode Island	Ronald Wolk <i>Chairman of the Board</i> The Big Picture Company
Sandra Powell <i>Director</i> Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training	
Marcia Reback <i>President</i> Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals	
Rev. Brian Shanley, O.P. <i>President</i> Providence College	

Introduction to the Task Force Report

We need to do better, particularly now with globalization and technology. No single constituency can do it alone. Collaboration is a prerequisite for change.

Adam Urbanski, April 30, 2009, Task Force Educators' Forum

For the majority of the twentieth century, Rhode Island's families and communities thrived on an economy driven by textile and jewelry manufacturing and fishing. By the close of the century, however, financial services, trade, health, and education had replaced manufacturing and fishing as the strongest sectors of the state's economy. In 2001, for instance, financial services made up \$10.9 billion of the gross state product, while manufacturing's contribution declined to \$4.1 billion.

From the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 to, more recently, *Tough Choices or Tough Times* (National Center on Education and the Economy 2008), our nation's leading economists, educators, and business, political, and civic leaders have predicted that the U.S. educational system's failure to produce students equipped to participate in the new global economy would have dire economic and social consequences. According to the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce:

[This economy] is a world in which a very high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, literature, history, and the arts will be an indispensable foundation for everything that comes after for most members of the workforce. It is a world in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life, in which high levels of education – a very different kind of education than most of us have had – are going to be the only security there is. (NCEE 2008, p. 7)

Moreover, in a digital age, this different kind of education increasingly involves electronic learning that allows students and their teachers to access knowledge and solve problems by interacting with other learners and information sources from around the globe. Digital learning as a cornerstone for twenty-first-century education and work stands in stark contrast to the typical twentieth-century school, in which learning centered on printed texts as the central tool and on classrooms and/or libraries as the major setting for knowledge development and use.

Unfortunately, too many of our classrooms throughout Rhode Island and our nation still resemble twentieth- rather than twenty-first-century learning environments. And the limited technology available is often used to create electronic texts and workbooks rather than portals to knowledge and learners around the world.

Our collective failure to redesign our state's and our nation's educational system to respond to the new world of learning and work has forced many companies to outsource high-skill jobs overseas, leaving whole communities and families behind in their wake. The warning signs of our collective failure are all around us and have become increasingly acute in the last year.

- Rhode Island has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country (*Providence Journal*, September 18, 2009).
- Rhode Island has the highest proportion of children living in poverty compared to other New England states (*2009 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*).

- Rhode Island is the lowest-ranking New England state in overall child well-being (*2009 RI KIDS COUNT Factbook*).
- Rhode Island has the second-lowest proportion of college-educated workers of any New England state (Crissey 2009).

These statistics present our community with a clear choice: support the educational status quo and continue our downward spiral, or create a future as great as our state's past by transforming our public schools so that they produce young people who can strengthen our economy, our families, and our communities.

The Importance of Our Urban Core

Such a transformative agenda should be pursued by every school and community in our state. But, as a small and densely populated state, our economic and civic futures are highly linked to the health of our core cities: Providence, Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. And no factor is more important to the health of these cities – and hence the state – than education (see profiles of Rhode Island and the cities in appendices B1–B6).

As noted in the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (n.d.) publication *Cities Count*, “by 2020, one in five members of the state’s workforce will have come from the State’s urban core school systems.” Currently, outcomes for students in those cities are improving, but remain unacceptably low. Only about half of elementary and middle school students from these communities achieved proficiency in the 2007–2008 assessment in English language arts, compared with about 77 percent in the rest of the state. Math achievement in these urban districts also lags behind the rest of the state, with only three or four in ten students reaching proficiency in the urban areas, compared with about seven in ten students in the rest of

the state. And the graduation rate in Rhode Island’s urban districts is 61 percent, compared with 74 percent in the state as a whole (see figure 4 in appendix B7).

Despite making up just under a third of the state’s public school population, students in the core districts make up a large majority of the students who are characterized as English language learners and as low income. The core districts also have a high rate of student mobility – 44 percent in 2007–2008, compared with 14 percent for the rest of the state – and contain more than two-thirds of students in the state who qualify for the reduced-price or free lunch program (for details, see appendices B7–B8).

Our current system of urban public education is not a worthy vessel for children and youth in our urban core, nor for the many dedicated educators who work with them. In the words of Peter Cookson (2009), “just as the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the wall of conventional schooling is collapsing before our eyes.” Redesigning the current system to fit the needs of the twenty-first century will require vision, bold action, and an approach that harnesses the state’s political, educational, social, and civic resources. It will require a technical blueprint, but one that also recognizes that reform requires concerted political, social, and cultural change.

The Work of the Urban Education Task Force

To address these many challenges, Governor Donald Carcieri created the Urban Education Task Force in January 2008 and charged us to work with multiple stakeholders to forge a plan to generate action and the political will needed to take the first steps toward its implementation. In response to this charge, the Task Force assembled twenty-six leaders from education, business, labor, cultural institutions, youth

organizations, and faith institutions; our work was guided by a group of six national resource experts representing different perspectives on reform. The Task Force's views and recommendations were also informed by local experts serving on Task Force working groups (see appendix A1) and by several public forums and meetings with key constituents such as teachers, students, parents, and community and civic leaders from across the five core urban communities. We also convened forums in Newport and Woonsocket to glean concerns and recommendations specific to those communities (see appendix A2).

We heard consistently about participants' frustrations with the disconnect between their schools and their district central offices; with territorial politics and poor communication that divide school from community, parents from teachers, and teachers from principals and their school district leaders; and with the lack of consultation with teachers, parents, and students about policies that affect them. They urged not just new policies from their public servants, but the creation of new cultures and practices that would foster trust and engagement in public education (see appendix C1–C2). In the midst of these criticisms, we also heard and saw a foundation for hope and success through our local best-practice visits and our conversations with students, teachers, and parents who are building partnerships to create twenty-first-century schools.

On Our Way to Twenty-first-Century Schools

There are many promising examples of innovations already in place in our urban communities across the state.

Since 2007, Central Falls High School and the University of Rhode Island have engaged in a collaboration designed to address the persistently low rate of student achievement, and the school now has full accreditation from the New

England Association of Schools and Colleges. The Central Falls School District and the Learning Community Charter School have developed the Growing Readers Initiative, which links Central Falls elementary schools with supports and strategies implemented at the Learning Community. The model embeds professional development in the school day and helps teachers to use data to inform instruction. At the Captain Hunt School, where the program has been in place the longest, the proportion of students scoring at or above the benchmark on kindergarten reading assessments grew by 38 percent from September to March 2009.

This fall, Providence opened two new state-of-the-art education facilities to serve the city's middle and high school students. The Career and Technical Academy opened to 400 new high school students who will work within nine different technical centers. The Nathan Bishop Middle School reopened to welcome 250 sixth-graders from across the city following a three-year, \$35 million renovation that included the addition of state-of-the-art instructional technology. Finally, a partnership between the school district, the Providence After School Alliance (PASA), and the mayor's office is working to build a seamless system of rigorous and rich out-of-school learning opportunities for middle and high school students through its after-zones model. This year, PASA received a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to extend the afterschool model to more of the city's youth.

The Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) is an independent public school that serves 140 seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-graders from the cities of Providence, Central Falls, and Cranston. All UCAP students enter the school having been retained in grade at least once. In addition to an accelerated academic

experience, UCAP students receive the supports and opportunities, both in school and out, needed to succeed in school, college, the economy, and broader society. A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of the UCAP program reported positive effects for UCAP students in both their future high school performance and rate of graduation.

The Pawtucket School Department has partnered with the Rhode Island School of Design, the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, and Fusionworks Dance Company, among other partners, to create the Walsh School for Performing Arts. Students can participate in programs focused on visual arts, theater, dance, and music combined with a rigorous course of academic study. Several of the faculty work jointly with the Walsh School and as artists with the partner organizations.

The Newport Public Schools works closely with local community partners to improve student achievement in Newport. The Newport Public Education Foundation, an organization led by local community and business leaders, has helped to fund local literacy activities and excellence grants and to raise funds for the district. Positively Newport Schools is becoming an important community voice organizing for citywide commitment to public education.

The Woonsocket School Department has created the Feinstein E-learning Academy, where students who are behind in their schoolwork or who are at risk of dropping out can earn credits toward graduation. Housed at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center, the e-learning Academy offers a unique combination of online curricula and in-person, teacher-led instruction. Enrollment is flexible and geared toward the needs of the student. Some visit the Academy after school, some are enrolled for a

more typical school day, and others work remotely and only visit the center for testing.

The Rhode Island Mayoral Academies (RIMA) is the oversight organization for a new type of public charter school in the state. Working with Cumberland Mayor Daniel McKee and a coalition of Rhode Island mayors and town administrators, civic groups, business leaders, and policy makers, RIMA is creating the supports and flexibility needed to attract successful charter-management organizations to run schools and develop innovations in instruction across the state, including the authority to develop their own salary schedules and health and retirements benefits packages. The first mayoral academy – Democracy Prep of Blackstone Valley – opened at the end of August 2009 with seventy-six kindergarten students and will eventually serve students in grades K–8. It is run by a charter-management organization that leads a middle school in Harlem that is ranked among the top schools in New York City.

And as this report goes to press, we have received news that the national American Federation of Teachers has made a grant from its new Innovation Fund to be shared by the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals and the New York State United Teachers. The grant will be used to establish a multidistrict approach to more rigorous and meaningful teacher evaluation, reflecting the understanding that an effective evaluation system includes multiple indicators and incorporating, among other plans, a peer assistance and review component.

Building Our Future

We can build on these and numerous other successes by marshaling the will and resources needed to redesign our public education systems as systems to support innovation and enhance efficiency and effectiveness. In the

following report, the Urban Education Task Force puts forward recommendations in seven areas that will create the infrastructure, collaboration, and culture to build the kinds of schools Rhode Island needs to thrive in the twenty-first century. This ambitious endeavor requires business, government, labor, K–12 and higher education, the faith institutions, and community groups to seek common ground to build upon and to sustain our effort over time.

This endeavor also will require us to shift from a culture enamored with differences and conflict to one that seeks unity around shared values and strategies. Despite a diversity of ideologies, experiences, and backgrounds, the members of this Task Force reached consensus around a core set of action steps. The only exceptions to this consensus are included as comments from the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals at the end of the Educator Quality recommendation.

The Task Force process was not perfect – some working groups were not as inclusive as others, member engagement varied, and some constituent voices undoubtedly went unheard. But the experience of the last eighteen months has taught us that differences are obstacles that can be overcome when multiple stakeholders come together over time to engage in dialogue, examine research and best practice, and work toward a common goal – creating an education system that builds our community’s future.



Warren Simmons
Executive Director, Annenberg Institute for
School Reform at Brown University
Chair, Rhode Island Urban Education Task
Force

References

- Cookson, Peter W., Jr. 2009. “What Would Socrates Say?” *Educational Leadership* 67 (September):8–14.
- Crissey, Sarah R. 2009. *Education Attainment in the United States: 2007*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- National Center on Education and the Economy. 2008. *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*. Executive Summary. Washington, DC: NCEE.
- Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council. n.d. *Cities Count: Connecting People and Places for the Future of Rhode Island*. Providence: RIPEC.

Introduction to the Recommendations

Governor Donald L. Carcieri formed the Rhode Island Urban Education Task Force in 2008 and charged it with developing specific recommendations for consideration by the Governor and the General Assembly on ways to strengthen and transform urban education in the Ocean State. The Task Force first met in January 2008 and met as a plenary group nine times over the next eighteen months.

Initially, the Task Force was divided into three subcommittees: Community Engagement, Human Capital Development, and Systems Innovation. These three subcommittees developed a total of seven preliminary recommendation areas that were issued in a report to the Governor in December 2008. Working groups were then formed around each of the seven areas, and local specialists from outside of the formal Task Force membership were engaged to provide their expertise. Each working group was charged with adding detail to the recommendations and developing specific action steps. Funding from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation allowed working groups to also bring in experts from outside the state to present new ideas and review work, as well as to support community forums in which various constituencies could provide feedback. Formal meetings and events of the Task Force are listed in appendix A2.

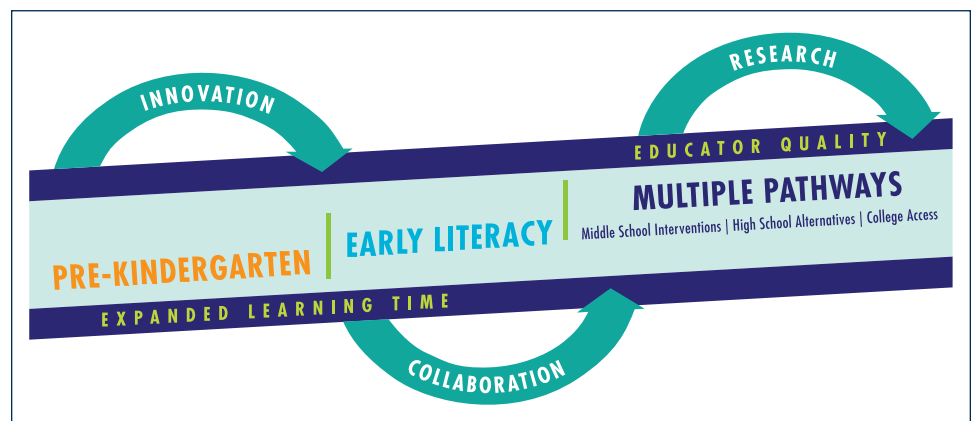
The Task Force was specifically not charged with addressing

statewide education funding. However, Task Force members emphasized that improving the equity of state funding is essential to improving education in the state. Currently, Rhode Island is the only state in the country that does not dispense its basic education aid on a predictable formula that incorporates the number and characteristics of each district's students. Such a formula is particularly important in these challenging economic times.

From the beginning, the Task Force emphasized the need for a set of recommendations that, as a whole, would provide a statewide agenda for improving urban education from pre-kindergarten through high school. Through its subcommittees, working groups, and public forums, the Task Force addressed three aspects of such an agenda:

- Attending to the specific learning needs of our state's children
- Improving learning supports and opportunities
- Developing the infrastructure and ways of working to spur innovation and continuous improvement

The figure below illustrates how the recommendation areas fit together to create a com-



prehensive agenda for urban education in Rhode Island. The pre-kindergarten, early literacy and multiple pathways recommendations attend to the specific learning needs of our state's children. The expanded learning time and educator quality recommendations are focused on helping to improve learning supports and provide additional learning opportunities. The innovation and collaboration recommendations (which encompass the research component) address key infrastructure needs and the new ways of working that will foster continuous improvement in our urban districts and the state as a whole.

Taken together, these recommendations can fundamentally change outcomes for Rhode Island's children. We urge their implementation in the same spirit that they were developed: collaboratively and with great hope for Rhode Island's future.

1 Pre-Kindergarten Education

The Urban Education Task Force recommends launching a high-quality pre-kindergarten program in Rhode Island, starting with a pilot program in 2009 and continuing with full implementation after the pilot, giving priority to children in communities with low-performing schools and low literacy performance in fourth grade.

Introduction

Research has consistently shown that three- and four-year-olds who attend a high-quality preschool are more successful in kindergarten and beyond – both academically and socially. Several longitudinal research studies have shown that providing access to high-quality preschool is one of the most cost-effective investments government can make. Momentum is building across the country to improve access to high-quality preschool programs. Many states have launched major pre-K education initiatives in recent years. Until recently, Rhode Island was one of only twelve states without a state-funded pre-K program.

Participation in preschool education has been steadily increasing during the past decade for young children from middle- and upper-income families. Nationally, 66 percent of four-year-olds and more than 40 percent of three-year-olds were enrolled in a preschool education program in 2005. However, enrollment in pre-K remains highly unequal. Many of the children who might benefit the most from pre-K participation do not attend. Families with modest incomes (under \$60,000) have the least access to preschool education.

The quality of preschool education is critically important. Only high-quality programs produce lasting positive outcomes for children. High-quality pre-K classrooms are staffed by

a well-educated, appropriately compensated teacher and teaching assistant with a small group of children (twenty or fewer). Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to engage children in carefully designed, play-based learning opportunities to foster development of language, literacy, math, and social skills.

Pre-K benefits children, their families, and their communities. From improved academic outcomes to the economic savings for schools and states, the benefits of high-quality pre-K are irrefutable. The following summary of the benefits of pre-K from the national organization Pre-K Now, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, highlights some of the research findings about the positive impact of high-quality pre-K education (see appendix 1S for sources and more detail).

Successful Students

- Children who attended a pre-K program had higher high school graduation rates (Chicago).
- Pre-K helped children do better on standardized tests as fourth-graders (Michigan).
- Pre-K reduced grade repetition as fifth-graders (Maryland).
- Pre-K reduced the number of children placed in special education (Chicago).

Responsible Adults

- Pre-K reduced crime and delinquency at age eighteen (Chicago).
- Pre-K lowered rates of teen pregnancy (North Carolina).
- Forty-year-olds who attended pre-K had higher rates of employment, higher wages, and more stable families (Michigan).

Stronger Communities

- Every dollar invested in high-quality pre-K saves taxpayers up to seven dollars in remedial and special education, welfare, and criminal justice services, according to a number of studies.
- Pre-K improves efficiency and productivity in the classroom in areas such as following directions, problem solving, and joining in activities, all of which allow teachers to spend more time working directly with children and less on classroom management.

Promising Work under way in Rhode Island

In 2007, RIDE and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT formed a Pre-K Exploration Committee that brought early childhood leaders together to review research and best practices for pre-K in other states and to share ideas on how to launch a pre-K program in Rhode Island. In June 2008, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Act, which directs RIDE to engage in a planning process for a Rhode Island pre-K program, including a pilot/demonstration pre-K program and plans for scaling up the program after the pilot stage is completed. During fall 2008, the Commissioner of Education appointed a Pre-K Planning Committee to do additional work to design the components of the pre-K program in keeping with the required elements set forth in the law.

The core premises for the pre-K program, based on RIDE's recommendations and the Pre-Kindergarten Act, are as follows:

- Pre-K enrollment will be voluntary (children will not be required to attend).
- Pre-K will be offered in a variety of settings, including childcare, Head Start, and public schools (this is referred to as a mixed-delivery-system model).
- Rhode Island's pre-K program will start with a high-quality pilot pre-K project and expand over time.
- The ultimate goal is universal pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds; however, the program will provide pre-K for children in the highest-need communities first (those with high concentrations of low-performing schools).
- Pre-K programs need a consistent and stable funding stream sufficient to meet quality standards. Several states fund pre-K through their state education-aid funding formulas.
- Rhode Island's pre-K program quality standards will meet or exceed the pre-K standards of the National Institute for Early Education Research, including a lead teacher with a BA and specialized training in early childhood education and an assistant teacher with a CDA or equivalent.
- Children aged four will be enrolled in the pilot.

The Pre-K Planning Committee completed its work in December 2008 and sent its recommendations on pre-K program design for the pilot Pre-K Demonstration Program to the Commissioner for consideration by RIDE. The target date for the launch of the Demonstration Program was set for fall 2009.

The Governor included \$700,000 in funding for the Pre-K Demonstration Program in his FY2010 budget, and the General Assembly included this funding in the budget that was passed in June 2009. In addition to this funding, the Providence and Central Falls school departments contributed additional Title I stimulus funding in order to add three additional classrooms. RIDE put forth a request for proposals for the Pre-K Demonstration Program and received over twenty proposals from a variety

of possible program sites, including childcare centers, Head Start programs, and schools and chose sites for the first pre-K demonstration classrooms in July 2009. These pre-K classrooms began operations in fall 2009 and are serving more than 100 children from urban and urban-ring communities. To ensure that the Demonstration Program meets high quality standards, the National Institute for Early Education Research will conduct an evaluation.

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

RECOMMENDATION Move beyond the Demonstration Program to implement pre-K in Rhode Island using a mixed-delivery system (childcare, Head Start, schools).

Priority should be given to children in communities with low-performing schools and low literacy performance in fourth grade, given that high-quality pre-K is a core educational strategy for closing the achievement gap that appears at kindergarten entry.

The Task Force recommends that pre-K programs be designed to address the needs of English language learners. Task Force members note that to close the achievement gap it will also be important to start interventions at birth, including high-quality infant/toddler childcare, health care, and child development services. The Task Force also supports progress toward full-day kindergarten in Rhode Island's school districts as a related strategy.

Moving forward, it will be important to build greater support for the work already going on in Rhode Island on this issue and to use communications and other avenues to increase political support for this work.

Accountability and Sustainability

We will know if this work is successful based on the evaluations of the Pre-K Demonstration Program that will be conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research, along with ongoing evaluations to measure the gains that participating children make in terms of language, literacy, early numeracy, and social and emotional development. RIDE will be responsible for the ongoing monitoring of this work, in partnership with Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and other community partners.

The federal government will provide new funding opportunities for early education in the form of Early Learning Challenge Grants that are expected to provide \$10 billion in new federal funding to states over the next ten years to support state efforts to expand early learning opportunities, especially for low-income and disadvantaged children. This will be an important new funding stream to support Rhode Island's efforts. Another federal funding opportunity is Title I dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that can be used to fund pre-K in Title I school districts. Thirteen states fund pre-K through a mechanism within their state education funding formulas, and the Task Force recommends that, as Rhode Island adopts a funding formula, a method for funding Pre-K be included.

2 Early Literacy

The Urban Education Task Force recommends the implementation of a comprehensive system of supports for K–3 literacy, with a focus on English language learners.

Introduction

In 2005, Rhode Island adopted a pre-kindergarten to grade 12 comprehensive literacy policy that emphasizes the need for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of each learner. As part of the policy, Rhode Island emphasized four key elements:

- Strong literature, language, and comprehension instruction that includes a balance of oral and written language
- Explicit and systematic instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills
- Ongoing assessment that informs teaching and ensures accountability
- Proven intervention programs that provide support for students at risk of failing to learn to read

Implemented effectively, these policies help to ensure that not only do children learn to read and write, but they also comprehend a variety of texts. Comprehension, not just rote skills, is the overarching goal.

The Task Force supports this policy and believes it should serve as the foundation for our literacy efforts. However, additional supports and guidance must be provided to ensure literacy success for all students. This support is particularly critical at the earliest grades and for English language learners: research has shown that children who are not fluent readers and writers by grade three are much more likely to drop out of high school (Snow, Burns & Griffin 1998; full references in appendix 2S).

In our information-based economy, the consequences of limited literacy skills and dropping out are much more dire than they were in the past.

To augment our current policies, we must acknowledge that second-language literacy differs from native-language literacy in important ways. For English language learners (ELLs), the background knowledge students bring to the classroom differs greatly. ELLs draw on first-language skills and experiences to break into English, and they continue to draw upon the home language when they need to, even at advanced stages of literacy development, to facilitate reading and writing in English (August & Shanahan 2006, Riches & Genesee 2006). For ELLs, comprehension is even more critical. According to the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (August & Shanahan 2006), comprehension must be given priority to ensure that students see reading and writing as meaningful and functional activities. Skills and strategies need to be taught in a meaningful context, not in decontextualized, rote ways devoid of meaning.

Because of the large proportion of English language learners in the five cities that are the focus of this Task Force, we feel the state must take an active role in providing specific supports for this population of students. And while we have focused in these recommendations on the role educators must play to support early literacy, it is important to note that the responsibility is not theirs alone. As a state, we must also support parents, libraries, colleges and universities, community centers, and hospitals as partners in early literacy development.

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

The Task Force believes that universal pre-kindergarten is an essential step toward early literacy. We support the development of the pilot program that is already under way in our state and urge the state to move forward as described in our recommendations for Pre-Kindergarten Education. It is our hope that the pre-kindergarten pilot will support providers' efforts to include students' home languages in instruction in order to ensure a strong oral-language foundation in kindergarten.

Along with universal pre-kindergarten, the Task Force recommends the following actions be taken to improve early literacy in urban areas throughout the state.

RECOMMENDATION Develop a comprehensive, guaranteed, viable early literacy curriculum and mandate its use in districts in corrective action.

There are no easy answers or quick solutions for optimizing reading achievement. But there does exist an extensive knowledge base that articulates the skills students must learn in order to read well. These skills provide the basis for sound curriculum decisions and instructional approaches for all students. The five critical components of reading as defined by the National Reading Panel (2000) include: phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. When working with English language learners, the importance of first-language learning to second-language learning is also critical. A comprehensive literacy curriculum should utilize a multi-tiered approach, including a strong core program with differentiated instruction and intensive intervention.

By making this comprehensive literacy curriculum “guaranteed and viable” (Marzano 2003), the Commissioner of Education could ensure that – no matter who teaches a given course or grade level specific topics, skills, concepts, and strategies will be addressed and that this content can actually be covered in the time available. *Guaranteed and viable* means that every teacher in every classroom at every school is providing consistent, high-quality instruction to every child every day. A guaranteed and viable curriculum promotes coherence, consistency, and equity across a system.

Action Steps Short-term

- ▶ The five urban districts should develop a comprehensive curriculum for early literacy, guided by the above description of good early literacy instruction and supports and based on Rhode Island grade-level expectations, Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, PK–12 literacy policy, and the WIDA Consortium’s English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners. This curriculum would build on ongoing efforts to develop curricula in the five urban districts, with an emphasis on sharing existing work and best practices. Partners developing the curriculum would also address the following areas:
 - Maintaining high expectations for all students
 - Instructing students based on their developmental needs
 - Monitoring progress
 - Developing growth models
 - Using data for assessment and decision making

Long-term

- ▶ Upon completion of this curriculum, each district in corrective action should have a viable curriculum. This can be achieved without legislative intervention; it is within the current power of the Commissioner.

RECOMMENDATION Strengthen oral-language development to support early literacy.

Research on brain development has identified a clear connection between early learning experiences and later success. Traditional schooling is important, but so is exposure to books and stories at home, as well as experiences that expand children’s real-world knowledge (such as trips to parks, zoos, and museums) and opportunities to interact with language by talking with peers and adults, singing songs, and drawing and writing. These experiences are critical to children’s development and serve as the foundation for literacy.

A lack of vocabulary is a huge barrier to reading proficiency. One of the most persistent findings in reading research is that the extent of students’ vocabulary knowledge relates strongly to their reading comprehension and overall academic success (see Baumann, Kame’enui & Ash 2003).

Hart and Risley (1995) identified a “30 million-word gap” in language experience between three-year-olds in professional families and those in families who receive public assistance. The effect of this early gap in words heard grows exponentially throughout schooling (Stanovich 1986). Therefore, it is imperative that we focus on oral language and vocabulary in pre-kindergarten and in the early grades.

The Governor, the Board of Regents, and the PK–16 Council should emphasize and promote the importance of verbal interaction – that is, just plain talking – between children and adults. It is the foundation of literacy. Adults in homes, community centers, libraries, and schools should encourage children to ask questions, discuss ideas, describe their likes and dislikes, etc. As a first step, on a statewide basis, this can be accomplished through public service announcements that help people to understand the relationship between language development and later literacy development and the important role of first-language development in the ability to read, speak, and write in a second language.

Action Steps

Short-term

- ▶ The Governor should engage a public relations partner to develop early literacy public service announcements to appear on television and radio, on buses, and in libraries and community centers. The public service announcements should be printed/broadcast in multiple languages and should highlight the importance of talking with children to expand their oral-language base and background knowledge.

Long-term

- ▶ Professional development on early literacy is weak statewide. The Commissioner should consider bringing Rhode Island’s urban communities together with the regional education collaboratives and other experts to share resources to support cross-district or statewide early literacy activities, such as developing library programs like Every Child Ready to Read, in multiple languages. These activities would be developed in partnership with schools, libraries, hospitals, and community centers and would seek to educate and provide services to parents and children that emphasize the

relationship between first-language learning and second-language development and the importance of verbal interaction between children and adults in literacy development.

RECOMMENDATION *Develop expertise in teaching emergent literacy.*

The latest research about effective literacy practices for English language learners indicates that the components of effective reading instruction that are critical for all early learners – phonemic awareness, phonics, oral-language fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension, and writing – also benefit ELLs, but with necessary adaptations. Such adaptations include extensive vocabulary instruction and oral English language development, cognate connections, and the explicit instruction of idioms and words with multiple meanings.

High-quality instruction is one of the best investments our state can make to ensure that all our students develop sound literacy skills. Classroom teachers should be proficient in teaching beginning readers and writers and specifically prepared to work with ELLs. Beyond the basics of English phonology and grammar and of competence in reading instruction, certified teachers should be required to know the basics of first- and second-language acquisition and understand cultural diversity from a positive, additive perspective. The current requirements for preparing teachers to teach reading and diverse learners need to be strengthened and guaranteed.

Action Steps

Short-term

- ◆ In their review of licensing policy, RIDE and the Board of Regents should review current certification requirements for Elementary and Early Childhood teachers and recommend how expertise in teaching English language learners to read and write can be incorporated into the requirements. This might include additional pre-service coursework for the initial Certificate of Eligibility for Employment or the incorporation of professional development on English language learning in the Individual Professional Development Plans (or I-Plans) of those seeking a Professional Certificate.
- ◆ Requirements for recertification, as well as for alternate certification, in Elementary and Early Childhood Education should also be reviewed in a similar manner. Renewal of a Professional Certificate might be predicated on teaching English language learners or on participating in specific professional development related to emergent literacy or to appropriate use of assessment data.

Long-term

- ◆ The Commissioner should consider bringing Rhode Island’s urban communities together to explore sharing resources to support cross-district or statewide professional development efforts on early literacy. Ongoing school- and district-based professional development planned specifically to support the curriculum (as recommended earlier) should be required of all educators engaged in early literacy instruction and should adhere to the principles of professional development outlined in appendix 2S.

- ▶ Since this commitment to professional development is a considerable investment in individuals as well as teams of educators who work together, adequate support for and stability in staffing individual schools should be a very high priority. As much as possible, staffing for early literacy should be guided by the description in appendix 2S. When coaches, teachers, specialists, and assistants have the opportunity to collaborate and grow expertise in a common practice, their students are provided with consistent instructional methods and objectives from year to year. This reduces the confusion that results from frequent shifts in teaching approaches and permits students to focus on learning to read and write rather than on changing routines in the classroom.
- ▶ Because of the relationship between pre-service preparation and the quality of instruction, higher-education institutions that prepare teachers should be engaged to build pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities in early literacy.

3 Expanded Learning Time

The Urban Education Task Force recommends that Rhode Island launch an expanded learning time initiative in the five urban school districts and implement it through a partnership between the Governor’s office, RIDE, and appropriate Rhode Island community-based organizations, with targeted technical assistance from the National Center on Time and Learning.

Introduction

The Task Force seeks to strengthen and transform the educational opportunities available to students in Rhode Island’s urban core communities. Expanded learning time (ELT) is an overarching strategy, going beyond what Rhode Island already offers its young people, to change the way that students learn. Within this overarching strategy, other redesign strategies described in the other recommendations can be addressed and implemented. We believe that ELT can help to align the other recommendations of the Task Force to ensure maximization of effort and impact (see figure on page 7).

In the past several decades, expectations for what children and youth must know and be able to do to be successful have changed dramatically. With higher learning standards in place for today’s students, the traditional school calendar has proven to be inadequate, particularly for students who are most in need. These students face many barriers to learning and have limited access to enrichment opportunities outside of school. Support for expanded learning time has grown in recent years as schools across the United States have tested a variety of promising models and experienced, in many cases, improved student achievement.

An expanded learning time initiative means not just extending time, but providing high-quality, engaging, enriching learning opportunities during that time. It is *more time well used*, which helps students, teachers, community-based organizations, and families in many ways.

- **Students** Provides enhanced academics and enrichment activities that are critical to the healthy development of the whole child.
- **Teachers** Provides the time for high-quality professional development and the time to teach in a way that deepens the curriculum and/or connects learning to real-world applications.
- **Community-based organizations** Enhances and solidifies meaningful partnerships with schools and potentially serves more students. Rhode Island has a rich array of high-quality afterschool and summer programs run by community-based organizations, which enables us to build from a strong foundation on their work. If community and school professionals were to cross-fertilize their knowledge and their educational and youth development strategies, the learning experiences for our children could be extraordinarily rich.
- **Families** Many families have working parents who need their children engaged in high-quality activities until they come home from work.

The additional time can also be used to focus on topics that are critical but have not received the time necessary, including STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) efforts. More time allows for the inquiry-based and project-based learning inherent in science.

Afterschool and summer programs are successfully expanding learning by offering new and different ways of learning that build on youth development principles. The proven afterschool approach to learning, which is necessary to the success of any effort to expand learning

opportunities, embraces the following practices:

- Engaging, relevant activities are often project-based, community-based, or both and are designed to increase student motivation to learn.
- Linkages are made to the school day, but content is delivered in different ways by applying school-day lessons to real-world settings.
- Academic instruction is designed to meet the needs, abilities, and learning styles of students and provide them with a better chance to succeed.
- Student choice is built into the program design.
- Partnerships among schools and CBOs are essential because they bring new and diverse learning opportunities (see appendix 3S).
- Students have opportunities to work both independently and in groups and to assume leadership roles.
- Communication between families and school-day staff is ongoing.
- Youth development practices model positive behavior management strategies that motivate youth and adults to work and learn together.

Partnerships with community-based organizations also help to alleviate any undue burden on teachers alone to implement an ELT initiative. (See appendix 3S for a listing of sample Rhode Island community- and school-based organizations that could join the ELT initiative partnership.)

Expanded learning time can serve as a model for unifying afterschool and in-school learning. See appendix 3S for a diagram from the Program for Afterschool Education and Research at Harvard representing visually the evolution of the relationship between afterschool and the traditional school day.

Research shows that English language learners (ELLs) can benefit from ELT (see appendix 3S). Currently there is not enough time to provide ELL students with all the support they need – particularly those older students who arrive in the tenth through twelfth grades. ELT could greatly benefit these students as well.

Current Work in Rhode Island

The Task Force believes it is important to recognize and build on structures that already exist in Rhode Island, including the Providence After School Alliance (PASA), RIDE's Childhood Opportunity Zones and 21st Century Learning Centers, full-service community schools, the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance, the Woonsocket Afterschool Coalition, successful Rhode Island charter school models, and related initiatives already under way in some of the core urban districts. As partnerships between schools and community-based organizations are central to the concept of ELT, model design must consider how to recognize and integrate existing and emerging organizations that can provide supports in a range of areas.

Task Force members feel strongly that in addition to academic supports, it will be critical to include a focus on the arts, recreation, and social services to address a variety of youth development needs. Special consideration must also be given to developing structures and supports for addressing the needs of English language learners and special education students. (Descriptions of existing related work under way in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York City are in appendix 3S.)

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

RECOMMENDATION Implement expanded learning time at demonstration sites selected through a voluntary, competitive proposal process.

Administered by RIDE, the ELT School-Community Grants will be distributed competitively to Rhode Island communities for the purposes of planning for ELT in the form of longer school days and/or school years. Preference will be given to those districts that consider a comprehensive restructuring of the entire school day and/or year to maximize the use of the additional learning time; to districts with high poverty rates; to districts with a high percentage of students not achieving proficiency as reported through the New England Common Assessment Program; and to districts that incorporate partnerships with afterschool programs, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education as part of their ELT initiative.

RECOMMENDATION Ensure that the planning and implementation process is inclusive.

ELT requires that the planning and implementation be inclusive of all stakeholders. Participants in Massachusetts ELT work (described in appendix 3S) noted the particular importance of working with union representatives early and often in the planning and implementation. In Rhode Island, the stakeholders include, but are not limited to: union representatives, principals, teachers, community-based and school-based afterschool and summer programs, and other community partners, including businesses, higher education, parents, youth, legislators and legislative staff, the Governor's office, and RIDE.

RECOMMENDATION Include a series of key design components in the ELT initiative that have been adapted from successful models to the Rhode Island context.

These components include voluntary participation; input from youth; partnerships between community-based organizations and the highest-needs schools and districts; equitable funding between the school and its partners; and creation by candidate schools of a detailed implementation plan, including staffing, breakdown of use of time with specific goals and actions, data systems, a cross-sector planning team, identification of suitable partners, and inclusion of academic and enrichment activities for students and professional development for adults. Details of these key components are included in appendix 3S.

RECOMMENDATION Target specific age ranges with appropriate learning opportunities.

Expanded learning opportunities defined broadly can be effective for students in grades K–12; the specific details of the implementation will vary according to the age of the students targeted. For the type of ELT structure we describe in this recommendation, preliminary research has shown that the greatest impact has been seen at the elementary and middle school levels. Expanded learning for high school students will, by necessity, look different because of issues surrounding work schedules, athletics, and other afterschool commitments that high school students typically have more than younger students. Expanded learning opportunities for high school students will more likely involve internships and apprenticeships that tie their academic, in-school learning with real-world, relevant employment (possibly for high school graduation credit), dual enrollment, and other examples of learning

beyond the classroom. Given the potential of ELT to help older ELL students who enter high school from other countries, the Task Force recommends that elementary, middle, and high schools (including charter schools) all be eligible to apply for a planning grant.

RECOMMENDATION Implement the ELT initiative at the state level initially by hosting it through a public-private partnership that is governed by a Statewide Expanded Learning Steering Committee, in order to maximize capacity and efficiency and ensure that this initiative is a catalyst for change and not a one-time project. The Task Force recommends that this public-private partnership include the Governor's office, RIDE's Office of Middle and High School Reform, and the Rhode Island After-school Plus Alliance.

The Steering Committee will develop a five-year strategic business plan for the initiative. The composition of the Steering Committee will include but not be limited to: RIDE, the Governor's office, legislators and legislative staff, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, higher education, the Board of Regents, superintendents, principals, teachers, Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance, Providence After School Alliance, community-based and school-based afterschool providers, funders, Rhode Island Association of School Committees, and youth.

In addition to the Steering Committee, each school participating in the planning process will implement its own local design team (composition of these teams is described under Key Components in appendix 3S).

RECOMMENDATION Engage the Rhode Island higher-education community in the ELT initiative.

University students, faculty, and staff are already active educators in many out-of-school-time programs in Rhode Island. For example, Brown University has over eighty outreach programs; the University of Rhode Island has an intensive partnership with Central Falls; Rhode Island College trains most of the state's teachers; and Johnson and Wales has significant service-learning requirements. Providence College has adopted an AfterZone campus in Providence middle schools supplying over fifty student volunteers each year, office space, research support, and facilities access to the over 200 middle school youth in that particular AfterZone. Colleges and universities in this state are a resource in the learning of our children and youth and there are many ways they could be even more of a resource, particularly within an ELT initiative.

RECOMMENDATION Allocate specific roles and responsibilities to the partnering organizations in the public-private management structure according to the functional needs of the ELT initiative.

These roles will be more fully fleshed out in partnership with the Steering Committee, but we include some illustrative examples in this section. In addition, due to the nature of partnerships, some roles and responsibilities will be shared. See appendix 3S for a proposed timeline for these activities.

Statewide Expanded Learning Steering Committee

- Develop a five-year strategic business plan for the ELT initiative.
- Provide overall oversight of the ELT initiative.
- In partnership with school ELT teams, RIDE, and an external evaluator, develop a three- to five-year evaluation plan with

short-, mid-, and long-term academic and youth development outcomes, as well as process outcomes for planning and implementation.

RIDE

- Manage the administrative components of the ELT initiative, including the request for proposal process, planning, and implementation process.
- In partnership with the Steering Committee, identify and contract with appropriate technical assistance providers and evaluator(s).

Governor's Office

- Participate on Steering Committee.
- Assist in the development of policy, sharing of results, and fundraising.

Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance

- Serve as the liaison for community-based and school-based afterschool and summer programs working with ELT schools.
- In partnership with the technical assistance providers, offer joint professional development for community-based and school-based teachers at ELT schools on both youth development principles and integration of academic standards into experiential learning.
- Partner with the Steering Committee, management agencies, evaluator, and technical assistance providers to share results, fundraise, and develop policy.

RECOMMENDATION Offer ongoing technical assistance and professional development to both the local participating schools and the Steering Committee to ensure that practice and policy are responsive to best practice.

The Steering Committee, in partnership with the public-private partnership managing the initiative, will facilitate the selection of

technical assistance and professional development providers. Targeted technical assistance will be provided by appropriate organizations with the requisite expertise, including the National Center on Time and Learning, the After-School Corporation, and others to be determined based on local site and state need.

The technical assistance during the first year with schools conducting their planning will include, but not be limited to:

- four to five training sessions for planning schools (e.g., overview of planning process, setting a vision for a new school day, assessing student and school needs, identifying schoolwide academic focus, developing redesign plans and budgets, etc.);
- supporting district and union leadership discussions and negotiations to ensure communication and coordination with the goal of reaching negotiated agreements;
- policy development.

Accountability and Sustainability

Evaluation

The Task Force recommends that a comprehensive evaluation of the ELT initiative be conducted by a highly qualified outside evaluator. The specific outcomes will be defined by the local sites during the planning process, in partnership with the Steering Committee, but will include both academic and youth development outcomes. In any work around outcomes, it is essential that the goals and outcomes be aligned with intentionality to the actual design of the program: hence, the importance of developing a logic model for the work. The Steering Committee will work during the first planning year to develop a logic model and outcomes for the initiative in partnership with an external evaluator and the planning teams at the schools that

receive planning grants. The Task Force recommends that the goals and outcomes of the ELT initiative be aligned and integrated with the Board of Regents' goals for student achievement and with RIDE's goals, outcomes, and indicators for its school redesign work.

The Task Force recommends that participating schools in an ELT initiative have the following broad categories of outcomes, to be determined in detail through a logic-modeling process with the Steering Committee, an external evaluator, and the planning teams at the ELT schools (adapted from Forum for Youth Investment 2008, p. 3; full reference in appendix 3S):

- **Youth-level outcomes** Academic and youth development outcomes
- **Program-level outcomes** Characteristics that describe and demonstrate the value of high-quality ELT programming, including activity characteristics and structural features
- **System-level outcomes** Characteristics of well-coordinated systems that lead to improved quality, scale, and sustainability

The Task Force also recommends that a process and outcome evaluation be conducted, assessing both the process implementation strategies and the quantitative outcomes, and that the evaluation be based on a growth model rather than an annual cohort model. Task Force members feel strongly that the design of the logic model and outcomes be appropriate and realistic and that there needs to be enough funding allocated for a comprehensive evaluation by an external evaluator.

Required Resources and Fundraising Strategy

- **Planning grants** \$5,000–\$20,000 per district
- **Implementation funding** Based on best-practice research, the annual per student amount will most likely be in the range of \$1,300 to \$1,800

- **Technical assistance and support** \$35,000 for the first planning year
- **Evaluation** [to be determined]
- **Secured and potential funding sources** The FY2010 state budget includes \$100,000 for RIDE to implement an ELT initiative, beginning with planning grants for the 2009-2010 academic year. The National Center on Time and Learning is looking for partners nationally to implement ELT initiatives, and Rhode Island has been considered as a potential partner site. If Rhode Island qualifies, federal support for the initiative may be available through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Race to the Top competitive funds and pending legislation. Private foundations have also expressed interest in supporting ELT in Rhode Island. The Statewide Expanded Learning Steering Committee will develop and implement a fundraising plan.

4 Multiple Pathways for Student Success

The Urban Education Task Force recommends implementing a number of steps to create multiple pathways to graduation and postsecondary success for young people, such as partnerships with adult education programs, access to AP courses, and courses offered at nontraditional times.

Introduction

Rhode Island is facing a crisis of completion in our urban districts. The Rhode Island urban district dropout rate is 26 percent, compared with a statewide rate of 16 percent. Students in all racial and ethnic groups in urban districts have high dropout rates, ranging from 24 percent of Black students to 29 percent of Native American students. Rhode Island data show that male students, low-income students (receiving free or reduced-price meals), students receiving special education services, and English language learners are particularly likely to drop out (see figures 4 and 5 in appendix 4S). National research shows that teen parents and youth in the foster care system are also more likely to drop out than their peers.

Students' need for engaging curriculum, involvement with at least one concerned adult, and a path to opportunity begins in the middle grades. Intervening with students who are struggling in the middle grades and who are identifiably at risk for low academic achievement and for dropping out is both less expensive and more effective than later remediation. Both struggling students and those who require greater academic challenges or a clear career path need to be engaged early on. Student involvement in the process of career exploration and choosing their personal pathways is critical to this work. Ideally, an individual grad-

uation plan commences in the sixth grade, so that levels of support and individualized pathways can be designed before the student begins high school.

A proficiency-based education system like Rhode Island's focuses on knowledge and skill development for high school graduation, college preparation and readiness, and employment and career success. The multiple pathways approach includes, but goes beyond, academic proficiency to provide a variety of opportunities and supports for students, particularly those who are struggling in the traditional system, so that all students can graduate from high school and enter meaningful postsecondary education, training, and/or work opportunities.

The Rhode Island education system is going through a time of re-envisioning and reform. Urban districts are implementing wide-scale middle and high school reform efforts in collaboration with RIDE. It is critical to support these efforts at the state and local levels, as it is only through ensuring that the highways of education (our traditional schools) are effective that we can ensure that all students have the potential and equal opportunity for success. In addition to this work, it is necessary to create a safety net for our urban students who are most at risk of dropping out of school through the creation of core alternative pathways.

The U.S. Department of Education has identified essential elements of dropout prevention and treatment that include the use of data, personalization of the school environment, and the development of alternatives for students who are not succeeding in or who have trouble participating in traditional schools (Dynarski et al. 2008; see appendix 4S). None of this can be accomplished without professional development for teachers and administrators on how to support students every step of the way to graduation.

Promising Work under way in Rhode Island

RIDE and Rhode Island’s urban districts are currently implementing middle and high school personalization efforts based on the Board of Regents’ new middle and high school regulations and the new Basic Education Program (BEP) regulations. These regulations provide for a number of “prevention” mechanisms, including small learning environments, connections with at least one responsible adult, and academic supports for struggling students who remain within the comprehensive school.

The BEP also requires that each local education agency (LEA) implement a systematic problem-solving approach to address student issues that may interfere with success. This approach uses teams that analyze data on student attendance, disciplinary actions, grades, and course completion. These teams then develop LEA-specific interventions targeted at identified student needs, including interventions both in and out of school as part of students’ Individual Learning Plans. Moving forward, efforts that include strategies to increase parent and community involvement will be critical to the success of this work.

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

Based on state and national data and research on promising practices to support student educational success, the Task Force offers the following recommendations to address the needs of Rhode Island’s urban students.

Using Data to Intervene Early

National research has identified the risk factors that can best predict whether students will drop out of high school. Schools and districts can decrease dropout rates by having systems in

place to comprehensively identify a majority of those at risk for dropping out and then implement multiple strategies to support each student on their path to graduation. This includes preventative interventions for at-risk populations, as well as recovery programs for populations that are off-track for graduation. According to the National High School Center (www.betterhighschools.org), the following indicators have been identified as the most valuable for identifying who is most likely to drop out:

- poor grades in core subjects
- low attendance
- failure to be promoted to the next grade
- disengagement in the classroom, including behavioral problems (e.g., a poor final behavior grade for the year)

RECOMMENDATION Support districts in creating early warning systems that can be used to identify middle school and high school students at risk of dropping out. Provide tailored supports to students identified using the early warning system and track these students to ensure that they get back on track for graduation within a reasonable amount of time.

RIDE and its partners should use the building blocks that exist in the RIDE data warehouse and the district information systems to develop this model and train local educators and administrators in using the early warning system. The early warning system can be used to identify many students who are at risk of dropping out as early as sixth grade and those who are struggling with the transition from eighth to ninth grade.

Action Steps

- ◆ Identify which districts are already using early warning systems.

- ◆ Develop a protocol in which RIDE can support districts in implementing early warning systems and monitor their success.
- ◆ Create opportunities and incentives for districts to collaborate in the development of early warning systems.
- ◆ Ensure that these data follow the child if and when the child transfers schools.

Alternatives for Students in the Middle Grades

All students deserve high-quality and enriching middle grade experiences, and most middle-level students do not need intensive interventions and alternative settings as much as targeted and thoughtful supports based on student needs and risk factors. For students who do need more intensive supports, access to appropriate alternatives to the traditional junior high and middle school models becomes essential. Note that alternative middle-level models are not limited to behavior programs, but can also provide a variety of academic and other supports to struggling students in grades 6 through 8.

Aggregate data already show that middle-level students in urban districts are performing less well, have been held back more, and are in school less frequently than suburban students in Rhode Island, putting them at increased risk of becoming dropouts. On any given day, an average of almost 10 percent of urban students were absent (see appendix 4S).

RECOMMENDATION Develop more alternatives to the traditional middle school and junior high school models so that all children have reasonable access to schools that are built around the needs of students who are “exceptions to the rule” and are struggling in their schools.

Developing more alternatives could be accomplished by expanding access to educational models with proven track records of

increasing student success at the middle level, with a focus on building on local successes and existing programs, and by exploring emerging national models that have successfully worked with struggling students in the middle grades. These alternatives could be developed through the Innovation Zone, described in section 7.

Action Steps

- ◆ Expand access to the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), an acceleration program for urban middle school students from participating Rhode Island districts who are at risk of dropping out due to grade retention. UCAP accelerates students who are behind in school to get them back on track for timely graduation with students their age, allowing students in grades 7, 8, and 9 to complete three years’ worth of work in two school years.
- ◆ Explore the use of expanded learning time models (see the recommendations on expanded learning time), other out-of-school-time programs such as the Providence After School Alliance, models such as City Year, and programs such as the College Crusade that can support student learning at the middle level.
- ◆ Support cross-district and regional conversations about increasing access to alternative middle-level models for urban students in Rhode Island.
- ◆ Explore public and private funding options at the local, state, and federal levels for expanding access to alternative middle school models for urban students in Rhode Island.

Multiple Pathways for High School Students

All students in Rhode Island deserve timely access to opportunities for a meaningful high school education that fits their individual needs. Due to the critical importance of a high school diploma for accessing future educational opportunities and for meaningful workforce participation, students most at risk of dropping out of high school are of particular concern. Urban students are more likely than students from more affluent districts to struggle in school and are the primary focus of the work of the Task Force. While eventually all students in Rhode Island will have access to multiple pathways to high school completion, it is critical to start by ensuring access to multiple pathways for the students who need them most.

Youth in Rhode Island's urban core are struggling; more than a quarter (26 percent) of students in the class of 2008 in Rhode Island's urban districts dropped out of high school. Studies show that students leave high school before completion because they are not engaged (often due to limited access to challenging curricula or lack of connection with at least one concerned adult in the school), have poor attendance, face other barriers to academic success (like English-language difficulties or special education needs), have behavior problems or family responsibilities that interfere with participation in traditional school models, and/or have fallen significantly behind in their course work. English language learners pose a particular challenge for the urban districts where they are concentrated, as they often need intensive academic assistance as well as cultural assimilation supports and basic English language instruction (see appendix 4S).

During the 2008-2009 school year, 12 percent of urban ninth-graders in Rhode Island were two or more grades below normal for their

age, 9 percent of tenth-graders were over age for their grade, 5 percent of eleventh-graders were over age, and 6 percent of twelfth-graders were over age. Research has shown that students who are retained in school or who have trouble achieving the necessary credits to stay on schedule for graduation are more likely than their peers to drop out (Kennelly & Monrad 2007; National High School Center at AIR Web site; full references in appendix 4S). Models that help these students stay in school, catch up on credits, and graduate on time with their peers are essential for assisting a large group of urban students to complete high school successfully.

We also know that the adult education system is experiencing growth in its population of young adults: from fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2008, there was an increase of 15 percent in the number of students between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. In the current program year, young adults represent 31 percent of all learners enrolled in Adult Basic Education programs. These programs meet a small fraction of the need, as there are 14,975 individuals age eighteen to twenty-four in Rhode Island who lack a high school credential. Finally, in 2008, 75 percent of all GED graduates were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four.

Rhode Island's urban districts are involved in essential reform efforts to make all high schools places where rigorous learning, growth, and exploration take place, regardless of the student demographics. The state should continue to support this process, continuing to maintain the focus on personalizing learning and the learning environment for all students, universal access to college preparatory curricula (including AP courses and dual enrollment

opportunities), and access to approved career and technical education aligned with industry standards.

The Rhode Island BEP regulations have laid the groundwork for the creation of multiple pathways through the requirement that each district establish alternative programs in partnership with community agencies that include strategies differing from traditional programs. Districts are also required to work with RIDE to ensure that older English language learners who cannot graduate with their cohort have age-appropriate English as a second language opportunities through approved high-quality programs.

Nationally, there are a number of models of successful alternative pathways for students who struggle in traditional high schools and who would benefit from non-traditional educational opportunities (including the New York City Department of Education's Office of Multiple Pathways and Vermont's Department of Education High School Completion Model). Developing these types of alternatives to traditional high schools for Rhode Island students who may be struggling and for those who would otherwise benefit from a diverse array of high school options will increase the number of Rhode Island youth who graduate from high school prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and the workforce.

The following recommendation envisions a range of recuperative and restorative strategies for in- and out-of-school youth. These programs could function across urban districts, thus focusing resources and creating targeted strategies for those individuals in each district who could benefit from these approaches.

RECOMMENDATION Develop a Multiple Pathways for Student Success Initiative at RIDE, in consultation with the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education and the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. The initiative should build on the new BEP elements that address multiple pathways and will be responsible for supporting, coordinating, and monitoring state and district efforts to develop key alternative high school opportunities for Rhode Island's urban students who are struggling in the traditional high school system. The initiative will also be responsible for developing a research-based "on track to graduation" measure that can be applied to each district and monitored annually.

Multiple-pathways alternative high school models will be most successful if they are embedded in existing district structures and if they develop cross-system capacity to provide wrap-around supports for students at greatest risk of dropping out. Potential models include:

- statewide or regional Newcomers Academy or other programs to help older English language learners and newcomer youth learn English and achieve meaningful high school credentials;
- alternative completion models for students who have too few credits to complete high school in a timely manner and for students who have family or personal obligations requiring them to attend school during non-traditional hours or study with flexible timing.

The development of these models can be based on the New York City Department of Education transfer schools for over-age, under-credited students, as well as on the Vermont high school completion model that allows students to access a menu of services provided both by their districts and by local adult education agencies (see appendix 4S).

Also, the initiative could explore opportunities for providing high school credit to students who take advantage of distance learning and e-learning opportunities.

Action Steps

- ▶ Investigate private foundation and grant funding and investment from the Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island through its Youth Development Committee to support this initiative at RIDE and the work of the districts in implementing these alternatives. Explore existing state models for funding these types of alternative schools when they are regional or cross-district partnerships (e.g., state-operated schools like the MET, charter schools, or educational collaboratives).
- ▶ Meet with urban district leadership to prioritize the elements of this work and to develop an action plan for creating more high school alternatives in Rhode Island.
- ▶ Explore Rhode Island and additional national promising practices that can be used as a basis for this work going forward, such as:
 - Diploma Program at Aquidneck Island Learning Center: A credit recovery model where students missing one or two years of credit can focus on those courses and receive a Rogers High School diploma.
 - Providence Career and Technical Academy Second Day for Learning Initiative: Out-of-school youth will have access to the new academy and to GED preparation services.
 - Woonsocket Feinstein E-Learning Academy: An individualized credit recovery program with online courses.
 - The Check and Connect Model: Developed in Minnesota with a focus on districtwide high school dropout prevention programming.

Access to College and College Preparation

College access and preparation is the main pathway to student success. The unequal expectations in our urban schools about who should attend college deprive many of our youth (particularly urban youth) of the opportunity to attend post-secondary institutions. A statewide commitment to the idea that all students deserve the right to equal access and opportunity for higher education is essential to ensuring that all students in our state graduate from high school prepared for higher education and the workplace with the tools and information they need to make college a reality in their lives.

Rhode Island has recently joined in a partnership with other New England states to form the New England Secondary School Consortium. Goals of the Consortium include increasing state graduation rates to 90 percent, decreasing the dropout rate to less than 1 percent, increasing the percentage of students who enroll in college to 80 percent, and reducing the percentage of college students who need remedial courses in college to 5 percent. To reach these ambitious goals, Rhode Island needs to work together with the other states and start immediately with a commitment to increasing college access for *all* students in Rhode Island, including those in urban districts who traditionally are less likely to attend post-secondary education institutions.

Any college access work in Rhode Island should build upon existing efforts and organizations, including supporting the work being done through the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education Early College Access initiatives, such as:

- summer dual enrollment scholarships to expose high school students to college curriculum early;

- financial support for high school students enrolled in college courses taught at the high school through the Rhode Island College Early Enrollment Program;
- highlighting opportunities at the Community College of Rhode Island such as the High School Enrichment program or Running Start;
- focusing on comprehensive programs such as the Pathways to College program, a summer college experience between the University of Rhode Island and Central Falls High School, or the Pathways through College program, a model designed to offer high school seniors the opportunity complete fifteen to thirty credits toward college while simultaneously completing high school graduation requirements.

We must also encourage ongoing collaboration and communication between the Office of Higher Education and RIDE, particularly encouraging the development of shared policy to direct these efforts. This work should also use the resources available through the Way to Go Rhode Island Web portal administered by the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority.

RECOMMENDATION Create a statewide college access working group which would include, at minimum: RIDE, the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education, representatives from school districts, educators, public and private higher-education institutions, the Rhode Island School Counselors Association, college access programs, college disability support services programs, community organizations working on college access issues, and students and their families to develop and coordinate a post-secondary access agenda for the state.

This working group would be tasked with addressing issues that include, but are not limited to:

- improving professional development related to post-secondary education for middle and high school staff to give them the tools to help students to access higher-education opportunities after graduation;
- increasing student access to financial preparation information to help them plan for ways to make college a reality;
- improving communication and access to information about accessing higher education in urban communities to better inform parents and youth (many of whom may be the first generation in their families to attend college) about college opportunity, access, and success;
- building on efforts that already exist and work with families, community-based organizations, and school staff to create collaborative structures that support schools in providing all students with access to college;
- setting goals and monitor progress on indicators of college access (including, but not limited to PSAT registration and SAT fee waivers requested and used by low-income students, college application and matriculation rates, access to advanced placement and other college preparatory coursework).

Action Step

- Create a statewide college access working group, identify funding, and appoint chair(s) to convene the group.

Accountability and Sustainability

In meetings with district representatives, college access specialists, community-based providers, advocates, and staff from RIDE and the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education, it became clear that the conversations around the topic of reducing the dropout rate and improving student success have only just started to happen on a statewide scale, in large part due to the Task Force efforts. The initial groundwork laid in the development of these recommendations will provide a roadmap for future dropout prevention work and will help Rhode Island to build a public education system where all students graduate from high school ready to take the next steps in their educational and professional lives.

The next steps for Rhode Island in developing meaningful strategies and interventions to assist all students to be successful throughout high school and into life beyond include developing more-specific action steps, identifying who is responsible for taking on this work, and developing benchmarks to track success and enable educators and those in local communities who partner on this work to continually improve the educational opportunities offered to Rhode Island's urban students.

The opportunity to address some of these questions was an essential element of the Rhode Island Dropout Prevention Summit, sponsored by the America's Promise Alliance as part of a national initiative to improve educational outcomes for youth. The Rhode Island summit was held on October 8, 2009, and was convened by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. (More information on the summits at <www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention.aspx>)

As identified in each of the above recommendations, there are promising Rhode Island efforts in all of these areas that can be used as building blocks for moving forward with this work.

More needs to be done to identify funding opportunities that can support the development of each of these components of the work. The following funding opportunities should be explored: federal Department of Education grants; federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds, including Race to the Top funds; federal and Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training funds; private foundation funding; funding from Rhode Island businesses as part of investing in the future Rhode Island workforce; and reallocations of existing state and local education funding to prioritize critical elements of this work.

5 Statewide Educator Quality Development System

The Urban Education Task Force recommends collaboration within and across districts to improve educator quality by implementing innovative models that differentiate career paths for teachers and provide more professional growth and evaluation opportunities.

Introduction

In the private sector, human capital is generally defined as the accumulated value of an individual's intellect, knowledge, experience, competencies, and commitment that contributes to the achievement of an organization's vision and business objectives. When this idea is applied to K–12 education, the “business objective,” or bottom line, is student achievement and, more broadly, the development of young people into productive members of our participatory democracy. In public education, *human capital* – or, perhaps more appropriately, *educator quality* – refers to the knowledge and skill sets of our educators that directly result in increased levels of learning and positive outcomes for students. In short, we are talking about their talent level – what teachers, principals, and administrators know and are able to do.

Given this definition, human capital management in a comprehensive educator quality development system refers to how an organization tries to acquire, increase, and sustain the talent level of educators over time. More specifically, it refers to the entire continuum of activities and policies that affect educators over their work life at a given school district. This range of activities includes pre-service/preparation and licensure; recruitment and selection; hiring and induction; placement and reassignment; professional development, mentoring, and support; and evaluation, career advance-

ment, compensation, and the removal of ineffective educators (see examples of human capital management frameworks in appendix 5S). A human capital approach – here referred to as a comprehensive educator quality development approach – to a problem like recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality educators in urban schools involves districts and states coordinating efforts around each component of the continuum for maximum effect.

Given the time constraints of the Task Force's life, the focus of attention in this area was on those activities or continuum components that most impact the pre-existing and fairly stable workforce of Rhode Island's urban districts. Key areas with the most potential to help current educators improve and, through that improvement, positively impact student learning and outcomes were identified as evaluation, professional development, and ongoing support. The extent to which states and districts are effective in these focus areas has a direct effect on whether they can attract and keep high-quality new teachers. Moreover, success in these areas also impacts how well states and districts are able to provide specific feedback to preparation programs on how to produce the sort of educators these states and districts need, how well they are able to identify and recognize their most effective educators, and, ultimately, how they deal with those who are chronically ineffective. In this sense, these areas form a foundation for the reform of other areas of educator quality development.

Several important components of the educator quality continuum (including recruitment and teacher preparation) are not dealt with directly in this document. However, in the long-term recommendations that follow, the Task Force proposes ideas for addressing these other educator quality development elements at a future

date. We hope that state-level action in the areas identified by the Task Force will assist the urban districts' efforts to create individualized, comprehensive educator quality development strategies that take advantage of specific district strengths and acknowledge specific district weaknesses.

At the core of these recommendations is the conviction that a shared conception of what effective instruction looks like and how we measure it in actual teachers is the cornerstone of all urban educator quality initiatives. We believe that this conception is multifaceted, involving professional standards of practice in areas such as content knowledge, pedagogy, classroom management, and family engagement; a code of ethical conduct; and evidence of student learning and progress. We also believe that a variety of metrics are necessary to accurately and fairly assess the performance of an educator against this conception, ranging from classroom observations and evaluation conferences to formative classroom assessments, student portfolios, and classroom artifacts to subjective and objective evidence of student learning. A commitment to this complicated picture of effective instruction is necessary for real educator quality development reform to work.

Current Rhode Island Context

To fully understand these recommendations, it is important to be aware of some state-specific contexts.

State Policy and Regulatory Issues

Rhode Island has put in place the foundational base to develop an evaluation system for all educators that will be based on the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards (RIPTS) and the Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership. Both sets of standards

were adopted by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education and are being used in some districts to pilot the use of new evaluation systems. In the fall of 2009, the Regents will accept public comment on the "Educator Evaluation System Framework" that will detail the standards and criteria necessary for every district evaluation system (see appendix 5S). In addition, Rhode Island's new Commissioner of Education has recently released her vision for the state's education system, "Transforming Education in Rhode Island." Central to the agenda accompanying this vision is her plan to ensure educator excellence. The recommendations in this report articulate a direction that is in many ways similar to the Commissioner's agenda; to the extent they do, they should be viewed as an affirmation of that work which has gained momentum since the inception of the Task Force.

While the development and adoption of these standards at the state level are important first steps, the following recommendations suggest ways in which the state might play an even larger role in evaluating and developing educator quality than in the past. In 2008, Rhode Island continued to score near the bottom in prominent national rankings of how states support and regulate teacher quality (see appendix 5S). These recommendations are in part designed to address some of the problems identified in those national report cards, and it is the opinion of the Task Force that these national reports should continue to guide reform within and beyond the scope of these recommendations.

Fiscal Issues

While some aspects of a statewide educator quality development system should have relatively low, or even no, costs associated with them, others certainly will. Given the current economic downturn in Rhode Island and the lack of state funding currently available for initiatives in this area, these recommendations

attempt to balance low-cost action or changes to regulatory policy with the piloting of promising practices that can potentially be funded with federal grants or outside foundation funding. The hope is that these policy changes and state pilots will inform and shift the Rhode Island conversation about what state programs and/or functions have the greatest potential to positively impact educator quality. Once implemented, the intent of these recommendations is to produce data that will indicate where funds should be allocated to support statewide educator quality as the state emerges from its current economic struggles.

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

The Task Force offers three short-term recommendations that will address critical aspects of educator quality development in Rhode Island and lay the foundation for four long-term recommendations in this area moving forward.

Short-term

The Task Force has engaged in a concerted effort to research similar educator quality development systems in other states, close consideration of the individual components of the system in Rhode Island, and a review of the best practices around each nationally. As a result, the Task Force makes the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION Require the regular, substantive evaluation of all teachers – both tenured and non-tenured – with evidence of instructional effectiveness as a major evaluation criterion. This regular evaluation should be based upon the multifaceted conception of instructional effectiveness laid out above and involve both the RI Professional Teaching Standards and evidence of student learning and progress.

The Task Force believes that educators should be continuously growing and improving and that regular evaluation of individual educator's strengths and weaknesses should drive this growth process. In line with these views, the Task Force recommends that full support be given to the Board of Regents' and RIDE's work on the Educator Evaluation System Framework, along with its proposed requirements of regular evaluation of all teachers and the use of instructional effectiveness as a driving criterion in those evaluations. The Task Force supports the articulation of a multifaceted view of instructional effectiveness that looks at a teacher's performance against the RIPTS rubric during observed lessons and in professional practice, as well as at evidence of student learning and progress.

At this point, local district leaders – in partnership with local union leaders – should determine what objective and subjective evidence of student learning and progress should be used. After an evaluation of value-added data in Rhode Island and the consideration with teachers of what, if any, role the unions can play in providing evidence of student learning and progress in reading and math, the question of the appropriate metrics should be revisited at the state level. Along with this, the issue of how we measure student learning and progress in subjects other than reading and math must also be reviewed. Above all, the implementation of this recommendation depends on getting wide, cross-stakeholder agreement on indicators and on how we measure student learning and progress and determine teacher effect on them. Without widespread concurrence that the ways we measure are both fair and accurate, other reforms based on the assumption that we can accurately identify those teachers who are the most effective are destined to fail.

RECOMMENDATION Ensure the enhancement of the current RIDE data-collection system to allow for the collection of all data needed to attempt teacher value-added data analysis.

According to a 2003 study by the RAND Corporation, “value-added modeling (VAM) is a collection of complex statistical techniques that use multiple years of students’ test score data to estimate the effects of individual schools or teachers.” While it is widely held that there are limitations to what value-added data can and cannot tell us about teacher quality, there is also evidence to suggest that it may be valuable – in conjunction with other measures of effective instruction – in identifying growth areas for educators, contributing to a multifaceted view of educator quality, helping educators tailor instruction to the actual needs of students, and driving district- and state-level reform of quality development systems (more on the Rand study of VAM appears in appendix 5S). While Rhode Island has the two critical components of a longitudinal data system needed to collect and analyze value-added data, it currently does not perform either of these functions. Deriving whatever value this data can provide requires that Rhode Island first collect and review it.

The relative value and reliability of this data will drive how it is used in the future and what role it can play alongside a framework of professional teaching standards, classroom observations, formative assessments, and other tools to evaluate and support our educators. While VAM is not the only way we can measure student learning and progress, it would be an important one if it could be done accurately. Every effort should be made to secure the federal, private, or state funding to make the necessary enhancements to the

existing data infrastructure, explore potential value-added models, create a user-friendly interface for accessing this data, and engage the various stakeholders in a conversation about what these data can tell us and how they should be used.

RECOMMENDATION Pursue national funding opportunities to pilot several currently available models integrating educator evaluation, support, and professional development in Rhode Island’s urban districts.

The Task Force recognizes that the state is moving deliberately in each of the areas mentioned above, as well as in the overall endeavor to define what effective teaching looks like and how it is measured. To edify and inform these efforts, the state should pilot one or more nationally proven models that integrate elements such as job-embedded professional development, using data to drive instruction, teacher leadership, evaluation based on multiple measures, and peer coaching. Done well, these sorts of pilots can help Rhode Island make sure the reforms chosen to be enacted at scale in the urban districts and across the state are representative of national best practices and informed by the cutting-edge innovation embodied in these models.

Currently, there are unique opportunities to secure external funding for existing national models that integrate educator evaluation, ongoing support, and professional development that could inform Rhode Island’s own efforts to create systems with this same integration. The American Federation of Teachers’ Innovation Fund, the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF), and the opportunities represented by the current work of organizations like the Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation

make it evident that there are unique opportunities to pilot new work around educator quality. In a time when new state or local funding for significant reform is unlikely, Rhode Island must take advantage of external opportunities to foster new work around educator quality that can inform its ongoing efforts to improve in the areas identified previously.

Specifically, the Task Force recommends that Rhode Island apply for federal support, such as a TIF grant, to pilot the TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement in the five urban districts. In addition, the Task Force recommends that Rhode Island secure AFT and/or private foundation funding to pilot some variation of peer assistance and review (PAR) programs currently implemented in places like Toledo, Ohio (additional details in appendix 5S).

Research in the fields of both private sector management and education (see appendix 5S) tells us that to truly build a better educator profession, we need

- consistent performance-based accountability with clear performance standards;
- constructive ongoing support;
- regular opportunities for professional growth and peer collaboration;
- a substantive career path with multiple career options that become available when individuals exhibit excellence and/or specific skills sets (e.g., exceptional teachers with coaching skills might be teacher/mentors, while teachers with substantial technology knowledge might have a hybrid role as a teacher/tech coordinator);
- compensation and incentives in addition to salary that are somehow linked to the way individuals and groups perform and distinguish themselves.

TAP and PAR programs stress these elements and integrate them into a cohesive, building-level program. The Task Force recommends a concerted, coordinated state/local effort to introduce these programs to specific schools and teachers. This effort should include local school district leadership, local and state-level labor leaders, RIDE, and any appropriate external organizations. Assuming the willing participation of particular schools and their staffs, the Task Force further recommends that the state launch a cross-district pilot in an effort to invigorate the dialogue around the issues of evaluation, professional development, and ongoing support necessary to inform RIDE's work in these areas.

In the following section we address how the results of these pilot programs and the state and local collaboration necessary to implement them can be used to inform Rhode Island's efforts to establish its own Educator Evaluation System Framework that integrates these elements and to implement it in an effective way with districts.

Long-term

The limited scope of the recommendations put forth in this report should not be taken to imply that additional reforms are not necessary. Rather, the Task Force encourages the Board of Regents, RIDE, and the urban districts to finalize a plan for proposing additional reforms that build on what is accomplished and learned from the implementation of the short-term recommendations and address the components of the educator quality development continuum system that were not dealt with there (e.g., teacher and school leader preparation, educator compensation, school leader professional development). This plan should include

not only recommendations for when certain components of the system are piloted, evaluated, revised, and brought up to scale, but also a clear timeline that lays out future legislative and fiscal actions needed if the system is to be fully implemented. Moreover, these reforms should be developed in conjunction with the teachers they will be designed to support. With these stipulations in mind, the Task Force makes the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION Provide full support for RIDE’s continuing work with school districts, their unions, and other partners to develop the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards and to create model evaluation tools and guides for districts that detail how to use the RIPTS in the evaluation process. Further, Rhode Island unions and the teachers they represent in the urban districts should continue to be consulted throughout this development process.

While a balance between state and local district decision making is important in all areas of educator quality development, the Task Force supports RIDE’s work to create a series of statewide performance standards with accompanying model evaluation tools and evaluation processes that build on the RIPTS framework. As these further tools and processes are developed, and as RIDE pilots them in different districts, the Task Force recommends that RIDE, the Regents, local districts, and their unions together review the extent of RIDE’s role in this area and decide jointly on a role that is appropriate and possible for RIDE to play. This review of RIDE’s role should involve considering whether RIDE has the capacity and authority to

- develop extensive evaluation process requirements statewide;

- establish a statewide rubric for educator effectiveness combining the RIPTS with objective measures of student achievement;
- train local district evaluators;
- ensure inter-rater reliability;
- collect aggregated evaluation data to help districts and schools tailor professional development and ongoing support.

To the extent such a joint review indicates that RIDE has the capacity and support necessary to play any or all of these roles effectively, it should do so. However, where a review of RIDE’s role indicates that certain functions are best left to the local districts, RIDE should examine how it can best support the local education agencies in performing them. Undergirding all of these efforts is the continuing need to engage Rhode Island educators in the process of creating these new tools and processes to ensure the investment of those whom these tools are designed to support, as well as the practicality necessary to make these tools useful.

RECOMMENDATION Create a cross-stakeholder panel to develop research-based, statewide standards and best practices for professional development and to advocate for the restoration of state funding for professional development.

The panel structure and process used to develop the Professional Teaching Standards was a comprehensive and inclusive effort that resulted in a set of research-based standards for teaching with wide support from all relevant stakeholders. The Task Force recommends establishing a similar panel structure and process with the goal of developing a set of state standards for professional development that would build on RIDE’s work on evaluation and the iPlan to drive how individual districts support their teachers. Such a structure and process would ensure that

professional development would be practical, useful, and focused across the state.

Moreover, the Task Force recommends that this body incorporate learning and experiences from the potential program pilots mentioned above, as well as from educators in non-pilot schools, into the conversation about how to best structure support for the state's teaching workforce. This body would also lead the advocacy effort to secure state-level funding for research-based professional development, the establishment of regular feedback opportunities for teachers on the type of professional development offered, and the discussion about how to regularly assess the efficacy of professional development delivered statewide by the districts and unions.

RECOMMENDATION Review and revise teacher certification, including the Certificate of Eligibility for Employment (CEE), the Professional Certificate (PC), and the requirements for each.

RIDE and the Board of Regents are currently conducting a thorough review of licensing policy in the state. The Task Force supports the Commissioner's efforts to add a more rigorous cutoff score for the PRAXIS I basic skills test to the state-articulated requirements for obtaining the CEE and consider the possibility of strengthening the requirements and time necessary for advancing from the CEE to the professional certificate. Specifically, the Task Force recommends considering new requirements for advancing from one license to the other that include providing evidence of student learning and progress as well as the consideration of a longer period of time before advancement that would allow for significant evidence collection and professional development before the professional license is awarded.

RECOMMENDATION Provide full support for RIDE's and the Board of Regents' efforts to prioritize educator quality development and their work to craft a comprehensive, long-term agenda to maximize state support for increasing educator quality.

The recommendations in this report endorse the solid start to augmenting the state's role in ensuring high-quality educators in Rhode Island's urban schools and classrooms that is currently under way. However, a more thorough review of all components of the educator quality development continuum and how the state can best impact them is necessary to keep this work moving forward. Focusing first on educator evaluation, professional development, and ongoing support will lay the foundation necessary for considering the reform of other components, including educator preparation, compensation, and accountability that rely inextricably on how we define, measure, and nurture teacher effectiveness. For example, once Rhode Island has determined an evaluation rubric for effective teaching and metrics for evaluating teachers against this rubric, it can use this model to determine how to

- reform teacher preparation programs;
- recognize and/or compensate the most effective educators (as identified by a comprehensive evaluation process) and school staffs;
- hone any statewide alternative-route programs or recruitment efforts to screen for characteristics of effective educators as defined by the state;
- incentivize the most effective teachers to teach in schools with the lowest-performing students.

To ensure the effectiveness of such a review, it is incumbent upon RIDE and the Board of Regents to meaningfully engage local district leadership, union leadership, institutions of higher education, and principals and teachers in the work of planning and instituting substantive reforms in areas ranging from teacher preparation reform to incentivizing highly effective teachers to stay in the classroom to creating hybrid roles for teachers to educator accountability and alternative compensation structures. It is the hope of the Task Force that the pilot programs recommended in the previous section will produce a new type of dialogue around these issues, driven by the real experiences of Rhode Island educators who have participated in these programs. The data and experiences generated through quality pilots should prove invaluable in considering how to build scalable initiatives designed to maximize educator quality moving forward.

Comment on the Recommendations from the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO, concurs with the recommendations of the Urban Education Task Force with the following comments and cautions:

- Student assessments are neither valid nor reliable in measuring teacher effectiveness. It is currently politically correct to discuss using value-added models for purposes of teacher evaluation and compensation. There is no evidence that teachers perform “better” because of monetary incentives. Further, teachers will not put their basic salaries at risk so that some individuals will benefit to the detriment of others.

- Teacher labor should be included in any discussions of further recommendations affecting educator quality.
- Advancement in certification status should not hinge on evidence of student learning, particularly if this phrase is a proxy for student test scores. The CEE is a certificate of eligibility to be employed. It makes no sense to extend the timeline for conversion to a Professional Certificate from a CEE. Perhaps the suggestion here is that there be a new kind of certificate precedent to the Professional Certificate. Certification and licensure should not be conflated with employment decisions that an employer might make.
- The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals does not agree with the recommendation that “full support be given to the Board of Regents’ and RIDE’s work on the Educator Evaluation System Framework.” The Regents’ proposal calls for educators to be evaluated annually. We believe that this is unfeasible, given district and school leadership capacity. Further, new teachers should be evaluated often before being tenured and then after tenure be put in a three-year cycle for evaluation unless there is cause to make evaluations more frequently. Student-achievement assessment scores should not be used in teacher evaluation unless valid and reliable.

6 Innovation for Successful Schools

The Urban Education Task Force recommends that RIDE, the urban districts that are the focus of the Task Force, charter school leaders, including the League of Charter Schools, the mayoral academies and charter school directors, work collaboratively to develop the infrastructure and policies that will support innovative practices in our schools. We describe here both a Center for Innovation and a Zone of Innovation as starting points for catalyzing and spreading educational innovations.

Introduction

The call for innovation in public education has grown steadily louder in recent years as determined efforts to improve schools have had minimal success. Innovation is a fundamentally different way of doing things that results in considerably better, and usually different, outcomes. Both “better” and “different” require change that is meaningful and substantial.

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

Believing that innovation is critical to the improvement of education in Rhode Island, the Task Force is recommending a plan to disseminate innovations already under way in Rhode Island from one school to others and to create new and innovative schools in Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

A Supportive Infrastructure

Innovative practices are occurring in many of our urban schools in Rhode Island – in public school districts, in independent schools, and in the charter system. Unfortunately, they occur in isolation, with very little support for sharing them with other schools and classrooms. We cannot expect innovation to spread like a fad; rather, we must be intentional about creating opportunities for educators to learn from each other and providing the supports to incubate reform.

RECOMMENDATION Develop a Center for Innovation led by RIDE, which would help identify, develop, support, and spread innovative educational efforts in Rhode Island's urban districts and throughout the state.

RIDE, in collaboration with state leaders, school district and school board leadership, charter school leaders, educators, and other partners should develop the Center for Innovation, which would serve the following purposes:

- Monitor innovative educational efforts throughout both the state and the country and communicate them widely to schools, community-based organizations, and the public. The Center would disseminate information about successful programs and practices through the media, through convening, and through publishing. In addition, the Center would facilitate cooperative efforts among institutions of higher education, government agencies, community-based organizations, and school districts to evaluate and disseminate programs and practices in the new, innovative schools.

- Reach out to educators, community groups, and innovative school models (in-state and national) to help stimulate proposals for new, fundamentally different schools.
- Commission research to identify high-priority unmet student learning needs.
- Ensure that high-quality technical assistance and other public and nongovernmental support is available to assist districts and new-schools developers create high-quality proposals, while providing appropriate oversight to ensure high-quality schools.
- Continually review and make recommendations for both legislative and non-legislative improvements in the state's new-schools initiatives, including recommendations for changes in the provisions for self-governed district schools.

Action Steps

- ▶ The Center for Innovation would not require a significant state appropriation, but some start-up funding would be needed. Longer term, the Center would be expected to raise a significant share of its budget from the private sector and relevant federal sources.
- ▶ The Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education would direct this effort under the direction and governance of the Board of Regents, thereby providing experience and continuity in achieving the Center's mission and carrying out its principal activities.

A Zone of Innovation

The process of innovation is most fruitful when it takes place in an environment that supports challenges to key assumptions about the world and the way it operates.

RECOMMENDATION Enact legislation as soon as possible to create a Rhode Island "Zone of Innovation" – which would initially include Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket – that provides a policy environment in which school districts and educational entrepreneurs are encouraged to create new, different schools.

The creation of new, innovative schools is more than an end in itself. In addition to providing a diversity of educational opportunities to students, the new legislation is intended to promote innovation and change throughout the five urban districts and beyond. New schools can exert positive influence on existing schools; they can be a much-needed research and development arm for the conventional system. Innovation means trial and error, risk and reward. Either way, it provides lessons to existing schools. Its successes, especially, have the potential to serve as powerful examples of ideas, policies, and practices that influence student learning.

The heightened awareness in foundations and the federal government of the importance of innovation in education bodes well for obtaining grants to fund a Zone of Innovation. But swift and dramatic action will be essential in competing for those dollars.

The new schools would be of two types: newly created charter schools and self-governing district schools.

NEWLY CREATED CHARTER SCHOOLS

Thirteen charter schools have been opened under Rhode Island's charter law. Additional charter schools in the urban districts can provide models for self-governing district schools and provide an incentive for school administrators and school committees to create new district schools.

Action Steps

- ▶ As soon as possible, the existing charter law should be amended to remove the cap on the number of new charter schools that can be created in these districts and statewide. In addition, the state should provide start-up funding, technical assistance, and, when possible, physical facilities.
- ▶ Rhode Island charter school students are funded separately from other public schools. Because the state lacks a funding formula based on student enrollment, additional state funding must be provided to charter schools, on top of what is already allocated to traditional schools and districts. As the state builds a funding formula for all students, legislative leaders should consider a base state allocation that goes to the school or district that a student attends.

SELF-GOVERNING DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Most charter schools in Rhode Island are independent of the school districts in which they operate. New, self-governing schools could be created by the districts themselves.

School districts already have the authority to close poorly performing schools and replace them with new, innovative schools, but there has been little incentive or public support for such action. The new legislation recommended here would include incentives to

encourage districts to create new schools that would have the same privileges enjoyed by charter schools and would be part of the Zone of Innovation.

Action Steps

- ▶ Creation of self-governing district schools would require the collaboration and approval of school committees, district superintendents, and teacher unions.
- ▶ Self-governing district schools could be created new or by converting poorly performing schools.
- ▶ The district would request proposals from various sponsors to create or convert schools. The district would set the terms of the agreement in a contract with the school sponsors, and that contract could be terminated for cause.

KEY SUPPORTS FOR INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

Action Steps

- ▶ **Role of Center for Innovation** Just as an organization's application for a charter to start a new school must be approved by RIDE, applications for a self-governing school would require the approval of the state. The Center for Innovation could screen and evaluate applications for charter or self-governing schools and make recommendations to the Board of Regents. Additionally, the Center for Innovation could support schools in the Zone of Innovation to attract new teachers.
- ▶ **Open Enrollment** The new legislation should provide that students in the five urban districts would be free to attend any charter or self-governing school in the Zone of Innovation where space is available. Where applications exceed available seats, the school would be required to admit by lottery.

7 Educator Collaboration

The Urban Education Task Force recommends creating new capacity for cross-district and partner collaboration to harness the state's full potential for progress. In addition to achieving greater efficiency of resources and a shared sense of accountability for outcomes, this new capacity would further drive progress in the critical areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educator quality.

Introduction

Over the past eighteen months the Task Force has studied promising efforts by the five urban school districts, charter and alternative schools, community partners, the regional collaboratives, and RIDE to improve student and school success. In our consultations with urban education leaders throughout the state, we have heard them express interest in working more collaboratively across school district lines to develop effective strategies, practices, and solutions to the challenges facing urban communities.

- District leaders made the following observations:
 - ✦ Superintendents would be willing to collaborate across district lines on common educational priorities such as English language learners, high school redesign, community partnerships, parent engagement, provided the time and resources are justified by the intended end result.
 - ✦ Superintendents recommended that the Task Force examine existing models of cross-system collaboration operating in other states and urban districts.
 - ✦ RIDE should be centrally involved in any collaborative effort, given the likelihood that the outcomes of any collaboration will be of interest to other school systems, with possible implications for state policy.

- ✦ The Research Collaborative, a partnership composed of nonprofit research and policy centers, should continue to function as a resource to the cross-district collaborative effort by providing data analysis, documentation, evaluation, and promising-practice research.
- The regional collaboratives expressed interest in lending both capacity and expertise in a broad-based effort to advance the goals of the Task Force.
- Several participants in discussions with leaders of charter schools and alternative schools expressed interest in collaborating with their counterparts in traditional districts in areas of mutual interest (mentioned specifically were educator quality and parent involvement).
- The Research Collaborative has completed research and policy analysis at the request of the Task Force, including a study of student mobility completed by the Providence Plan, funded in part by a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation (see appendix 7S).

Active members of the Research Collaborative are Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, the Providence Plan, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and the Urban Education Policy Program at Brown, the Northeast Regional Lab at Education Development Center, and Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council. In June, representatives of the Research Collaborative attended a national conference in Chicago designed to promote approaches to research collaboration modeled after the Consortium on Chicago School Research. Representatives from nineteen urban areas attended the meeting and are making plans to form a professional network that could be a source of technical support for the emerging Research Collaborative here in Rhode Island.

Current Rhode Island Context

There are some notable examples of educator collaboration in Rhode Island, such as the promising partnership between Central Falls Public Schools and the Learning Community Charter School. Also, the mission of the four regional collaboratives is to serve the collective instructional and non-instructional needs of member districts. However, substantial collaboration among educators across district lines or between traditional districts and charters remains rare and episodic.

The main conclusion of the Task Force's fact-finding stage is that there is both interest and willingness on the part of educators for more purposeful, organized, and sustained collaboration. This dovetails with the need for more efficient use of resources in these challenging economic times and the renewed interest of both the federal government and foundations in cross-sector partnerships to support urban education reform.

Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partner Responsibilities

In the latter stages of its work, the Task Force has grappled with the challenge of sustaining the cross-sector (e.g., education, business, labor, community-based organizations, arts and cultural institutions) dialogue and partnership the Task Force helped to create, while shifting the focus from developing a plan to monitoring and supporting its implementation. And while we recognize that RIDE and the districts are making impressive strides, we firmly believe that it will take concerted and aligned support from all major stakeholders and partners to create the will and capacity to transform our schools and enhance outcomes for all students.

As noted above, education stakeholders throughout the state – in the urban districts, RIDE, charter and alternative schools, higher education, and business and community organ-

izations – have expressed the willingness to work together to reverse persistently low trends in urban school performance noted in the introduction to this report. Elements of the new capacity that needs to be developed include planning and implementation support, fundraising, community engagement and outreach, research and data analysis, communications, and reporting.

In response, we propose the following short-term objectives and action steps to launch such an effort over the next six months.

RECOMMENDATION Create an Urban Education Consortium, serving as a public-private partnership, that would be endorsed by the Governor, the Board of Regents, the General Assembly, and the Commissioner of Education but would be supported by private donors and governed by an independent advisory board.

The Consortium would be established to undertake the following proposed responsibilities:

- Serve as an ongoing voice for fundamental education reform in the state through evidence-based advocacy and by building the knowledge and political will needed to take on tough changes in policy and practice.
- Monitor and support the efforts of the education agencies, their partners, and the broader community to implement the Task Force recommendations and new priorities established by the Regents, RIDE, and the districts.
- Produce an annual report on the state of urban education in Rhode Island that focuses on one or more of the recommendations, as well as on the overall performance of urban students.
- Conduct public forums to engage and mobilize various constituencies and shareholders (students, educators, administra-

tors, business leaders, parents, union leaders, elected officials, partner organizations, funders, higher education leaders, etc.) and to channel their concerns and aspirations into constructive action.

Two co-chairs, accomplished and committed leaders representing the business and education communities, would lead the proposed organization. As a consortium, the organization would operate with a small staff, solicit grants to support its work, and draw on the expertise of a core group of partner organizations such as the Providence Plan, KIDS COUNT, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Young Voices, and the Rhode Island After School Plus Alliance, among others. Leadership of the Consortium would help to determine the Consortium's role in relation to the Center for Innovation mentioned in the recommendation on Innovation for School Success.

Action Steps

- ▶ Convene a cross-sector design team from existing Task Force members and others to develop parameters for this new entity – its mission and bylaws, a collaborative governance structure, a funding mechanism, and a staffing plan.
- ▶ Develop a work scope that addresses the most urgent priorities of the Task Force.
- ▶ Convene a team, in conjunction with the Urban Education Consortium, to pursue external core funding from national foundations (Gates, Ford, Carnegie, Broad, and Nellie Mae, among others) to support the implementation of the Task Force recommendations and the organizational capacity needed to support them.

RECOMMENDATION Expand the existing Research Collaborative to provide the required analytic and research support to implement the Task Force recommendations.

To date, the Research Collaborative has provided a range of technical support to the Task Force, including analysis of student and school performance data, documentation of student mobility between schools and districts, promising practice scans, documentation and analysis of constituency engagement forums, and production of model program profiles. We recommend that the Research Collaborative acquire institutional partners with the capacity to support the implementation of Task Force recommendations (see appendix 7S).

The Research Collaborative could provide the following types of services in support of work in the field:

- Documentation and evaluation of pilot projects
- Development of planning and implementation tools
- Dissemination of evidence-based promising practices
- Construction of a value-added data system (see the recommendation on a Statewide Educator Quality Development System)
- Development of performance standards and indicators
- Assistance to RIDE with rollout of the longitudinal data system
- Training of end users in the state's vast data-warehouse collection

Action Steps

- ▶ Recruit new member organizations to the Research Collaborative to meet the technical and substantive needs to support implementation of the recommendation and action steps outlined in the preceding recommendation.
- ▶ Develop a Research Collaborative work scope based on the previous action step.
- ▶ Secure funding for the Research Collaborative.