



Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Public Education: 2022-2027

Note from PK-12 and Postsecondary Leaders

Dear Fellow Rhode Islanders,

We are excited to share with you Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Public Education: 2022-2027. This comprehensive plan lays out a vision for an education system that offers every Rhode Island student the opportunity to be a lifelong learner. While this plan is informed by the events of the pandemic, it looks beyond to address the root issues that impede students from thriving at every level of their education. It lays out ambitious, achievable goals to build a stronger, more resilient educational ecosystem across our state that will allow every Rhode Island student to succeed.

This plan is divided into three sections: a strategic plan for PK-12 education; a strategic plan for postsecondary education; and a combined plan that outlines the priorities between both systems. Based on feedback received from communities in every corner of our state, this plan reflects the needs of every Rhode Islander. Education is the cornerstone of a prepared workforce and a flourishing society, and we present this plan to you with full certainty that if we achieve these goals, we can create a better life for all.

Laying out the priorities, commitments, and goals, outlined in this document is only the beginning of our shared efforts to improve Rhode Island's education system. It will take a long, constant effort to bring them to fruition over the next five years and to reach the ambitious benchmarks we have outlined. But there is no doubt that, if we set our sights on a better education system and forge forward as one, we can make it a reality.

Sincerely,



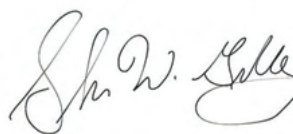
Barbara S. Cottam, Chair
Rhode Island Board of Education



Timothy DelGiudice, Chair
Council on Postsecondary Education



Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner
Elementary and Secondary Education
Secondary Education



Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D., Commissioner
Postsecondary Education



RIDE

Rhode Island
Department
of Education



RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for Public Education

2022-2027

- PreK-12 Strategic Plan**..... 1
- Mission and Vision..... 3
- Theory of Action..... 5
- Values..... 7
- Priorities..... 9
- Equity Priority and Goals..... 11
- Excellence in Learning Priority and Goals..... 13
- Engaged Communities Priority and Goals..... 15
- World Class Talent Priority and Goals..... 17
- Governance Structures Priority and Goals..... 19
- Implementation Roadmap..... 21
- PrepareRI: A Unified Action Plan for College & Career Readiness**..... 23
- Letters from the Postsecondary Council..... 27
- Postsecondary Coordination and Efficiency (Statutory Duties)..... 30
- Postsecondary Strategic Plan**..... 31
- Mission, Theory of Action..... 32
- Values..... 33
- Priorities: Equity..... 34
- Affordability..... 35
- Adult Success..... 36
- Workforce Alignment..... 37
- Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions..... 38



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education



Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success

Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for
PK-12 Education, 2021-2027

Note from Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green

Dec. 2020

Dear Community,

This past year has been incredibly challenging in so many ways for so many members of our Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) community. All throughout our response to this pandemic, we have been hard at work making sure that we move the ball forward so we can chart a clear course for the progress we need.

*With that long-term thinking in mind, we are excited to present *Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success, Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education, 2021-2027*. As a Department, we are committed to putting into practice the frameworks and resources necessary to support our local education agencies (LEAs) by building plans that bring our shared vision to a reality.*

In contrast to past plans, this strategic plan is driven at its very core by our mission, our vision and our values. Developed over the past year with input from our teachers, staff, partners and surveys from the field, the plan provides a clear framework and outcomes that fosters partnership, values diversity, increases transparency, is results driven and above all puts kids first.

By shifting to this model we are enabling and encouraging our teams, districts and leaders to have the agility and support they need to improve outcomes statewide. This approach empowers those closest to the work to map the best path to success by aligning districts and stakeholders towards our common goals.

A strong strategic plan is critical but insufficient; the plan will only be as impactful as the fidelity with which it is implemented across the state and at all levels of the organization. As we work to put this plan into motion, we will collaborate with our school and district leaders to provide them the support they need to execute and systemize change in our classrooms that our students and families deserve.

Sincerely,



Angélica Infante-Green
Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Note from Chair Barbara Cottam

Dec. 2020

Dear Community,

*On behalf of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, we are excited to share the newest strategic plan for education for years 2021-2027, **Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success**.*

This plan was developed by our team at the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) in partnership with stakeholders across our state and crafted with our students' future in mind. A forward-thinking and collaborative document, it provides critical frameworks and guidance that our local education agencies (LEAs) need to build supportive strategies at the community level.

*A plan that above all focuses on our students' success, **Together Through Opportunity** is results driven and sets measurable goals that our school leaders can work towards in ways that best meet the needs of their school community. Intended to guide efforts at the state, LEA, and school levels around a shared definition of success, this is a different approach than in the past. The plan enables all levels of the education system to keep one another accountable for the progress and commitment needed, while adapting if necessary, for our students.*

I look forward to working with the team at RIDE, school leaders and our community to advance the goals outlined in this plan and ensure the work is implemented throughout the organization so that all schools are supported.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Cottam".

Barbara Cottam
Chair, Rhode Island Board of Education

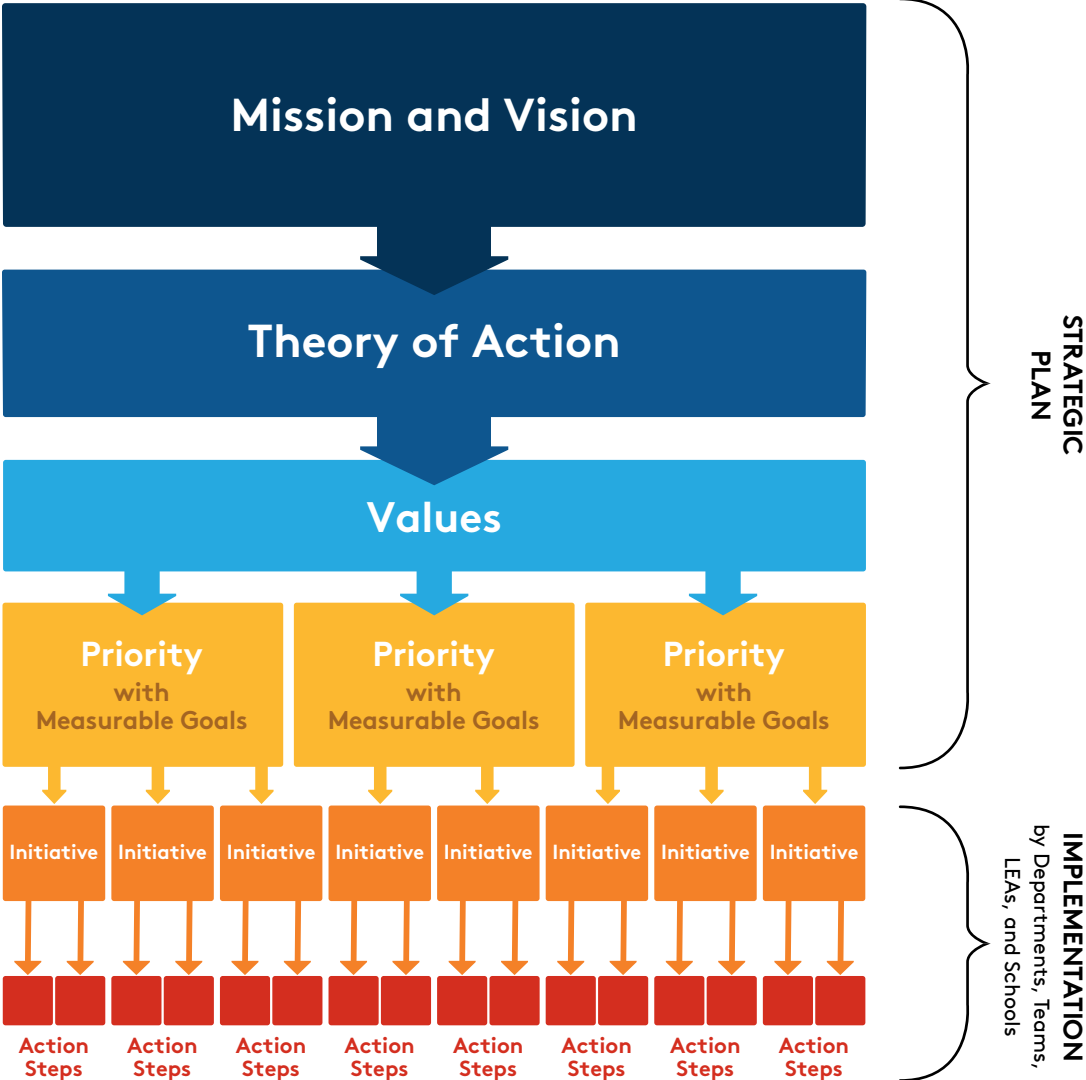
The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan follows a framework that begins with a mission and vision, and centers around a set of core priorities.

Mission, Vision, Theory of Action, Priorities, and Measurable Goals lay out the agency's fundamental beliefs, key priorities, and goals for the next six years.

Initiatives and Action Steps are developed by each department or team and revisited regularly to ensure that teams' daily actions reinforce the priorities outlined in this plan.

Priority Framework:



Mission and Vision

Mission

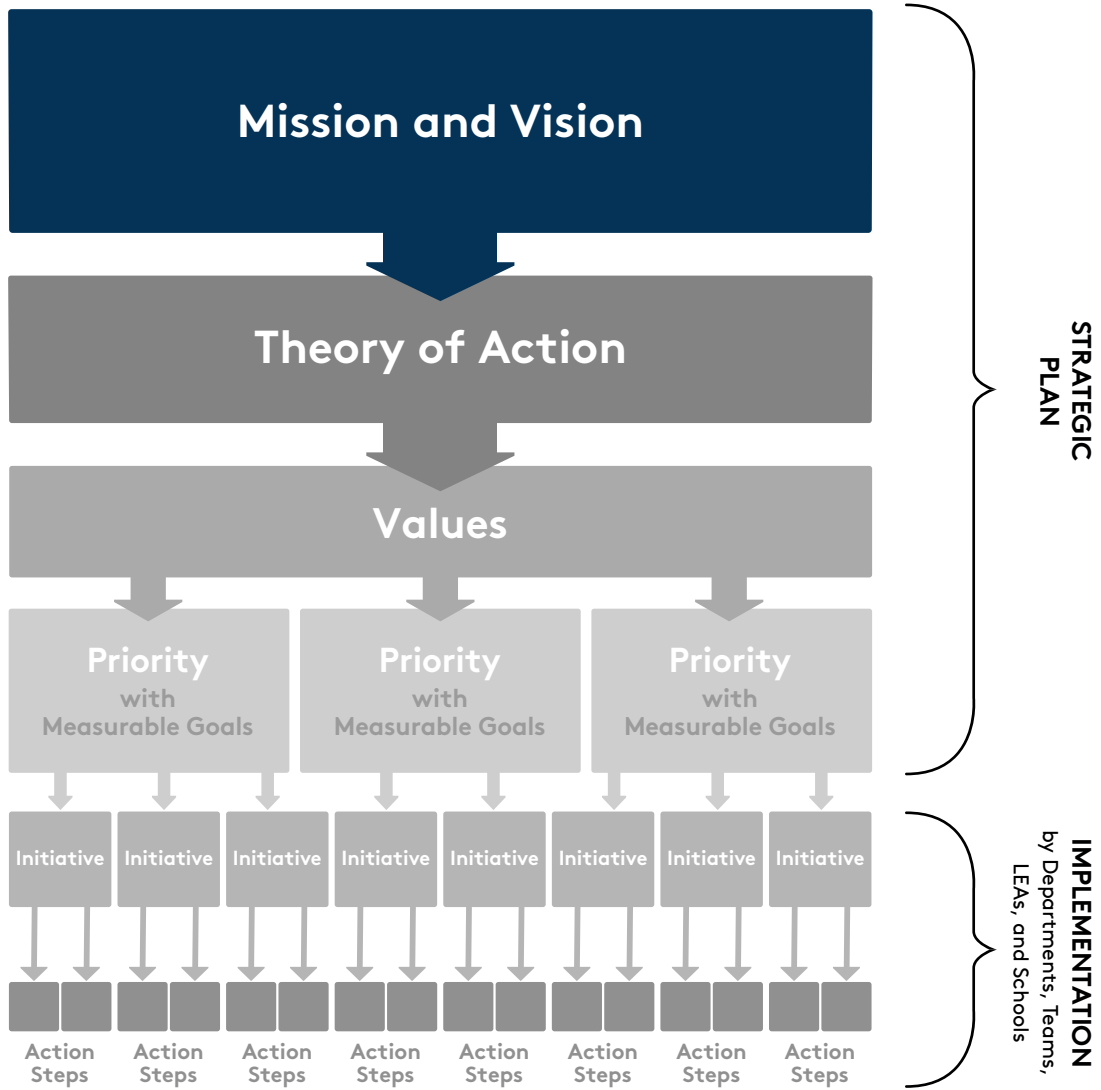
The mission of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is threefold:

1. To lead and support districts, schools, and communities through a unified, strategic direction for education in the state.
2. To use policy, advocacy, and governance structures to create an environment that advances opportunities for all students.
3. To maintain collaboration and efficiency in the department that enables innovation, agility, and continuous learning.

Vision

RIDE creates conditions for every Rhode Island student to think critically and collaboratively, and act as a creative, self-motivated, culturally and globally competent learner. Rhode Island students are prepared to lead fulfilling and productive lives, succeed in academic and employment settings, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Priority Framework:



Theory of Action

If RIDE...

- 1. Sets a high bar for educational excellence** that is based on the belief that all students can and will achieve great outcomes,
- 2. Develops policies and practices that enable all students to achieve this high bar** for excellence through school-based services that are supported by the district and state,
- 3. Engages stakeholders to co-develop core policies and practices** in response to community needs, and
- 4. Partners with schools and districts to adapt their practices** and address the unique challenges that keep students from achieving great outcomes,

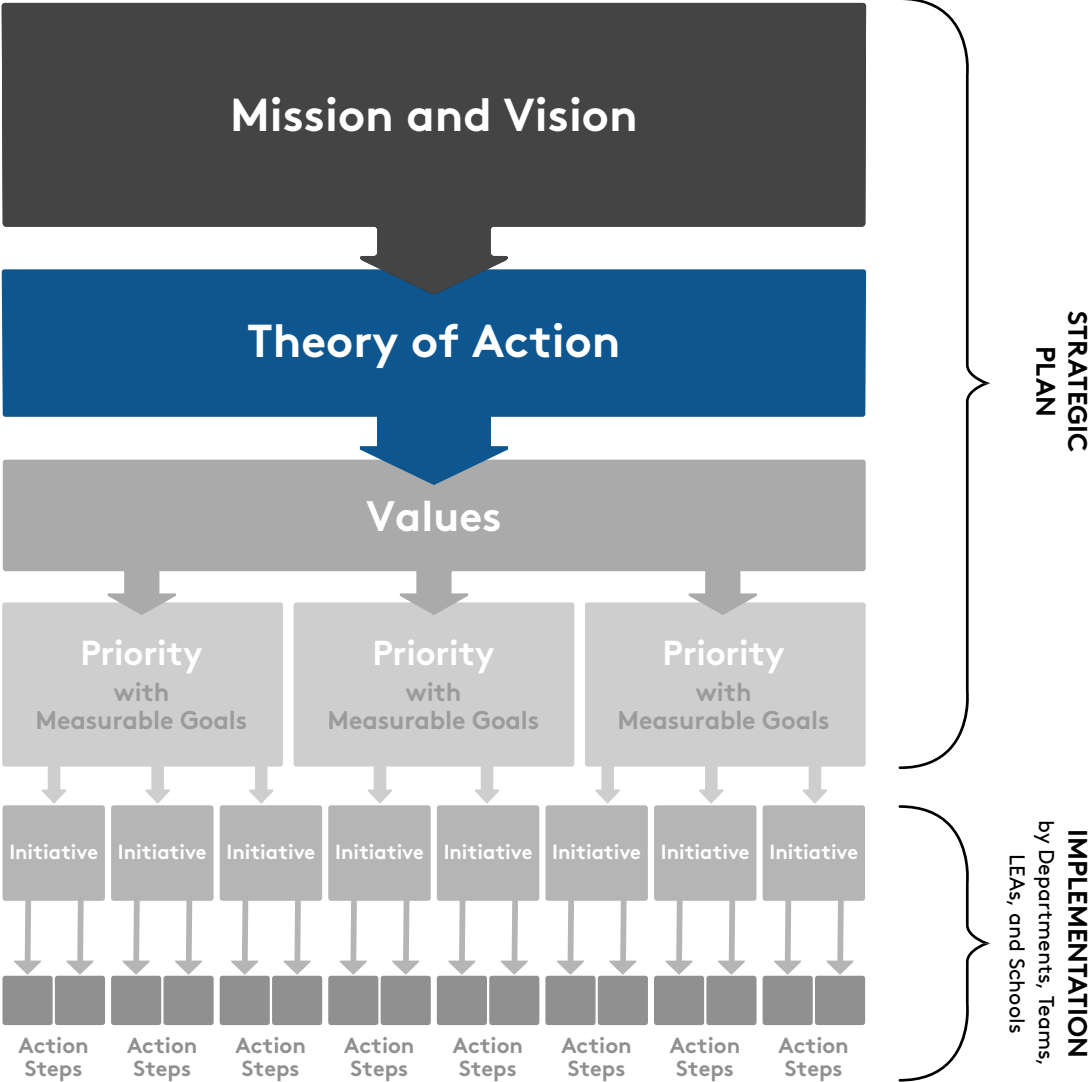
Then RIDE can...

1. Ensure all schools **meet or exceed the high bar** set for educational excellence and student outcomes, and
2. Partner with districts and schools to **create conditions that meaningfully improve student learning** and growth,

So that...

All levels of the educational system work together to **enable equitable opportunities and excellent outcomes** for students.

Priority Framework:



Values

Students First

We think about students first, in every decision we make.

Our decisions are grounded in how to best serve all students. We support districts and schools to be engaging, provide students with intellectual choice, and prepare students to be lifelong learners.

Partnership

We co-create opportunities for students with community members.

Decisions that impact students are best made by those who are deeply attuned to students' needs. We believe in meaningfully engaging families and community partners to drive decisions and co-develop ideas and practices that best serve the needs of students and encourage their ongoing development and growth.

Diversity

We create equitable pathways to success for staff and students.

We value diversity and make decisions grounded in cultural competency. We believe all students are capable of learning and achieving, and staff with diverse backgrounds add value to the learning community.

Transparency

We share information and decisions transparently with our partners.

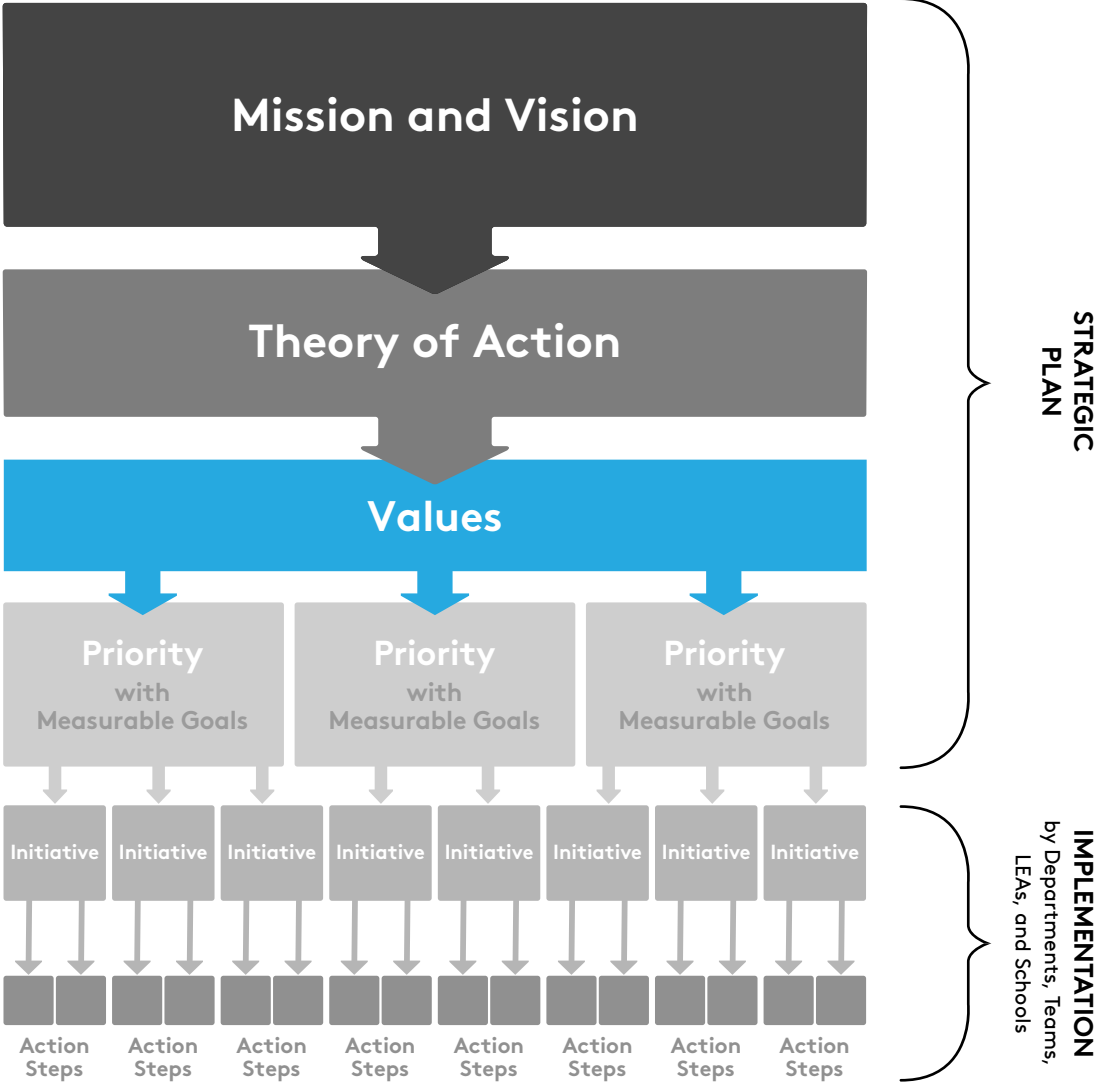
We share transparent, accessible information both internally and externally with stakeholders so that decisions can be made thoughtfully, based on data, to benefit all students.

Results

We focus on outcomes but are flexible in our approaches to achieve them.

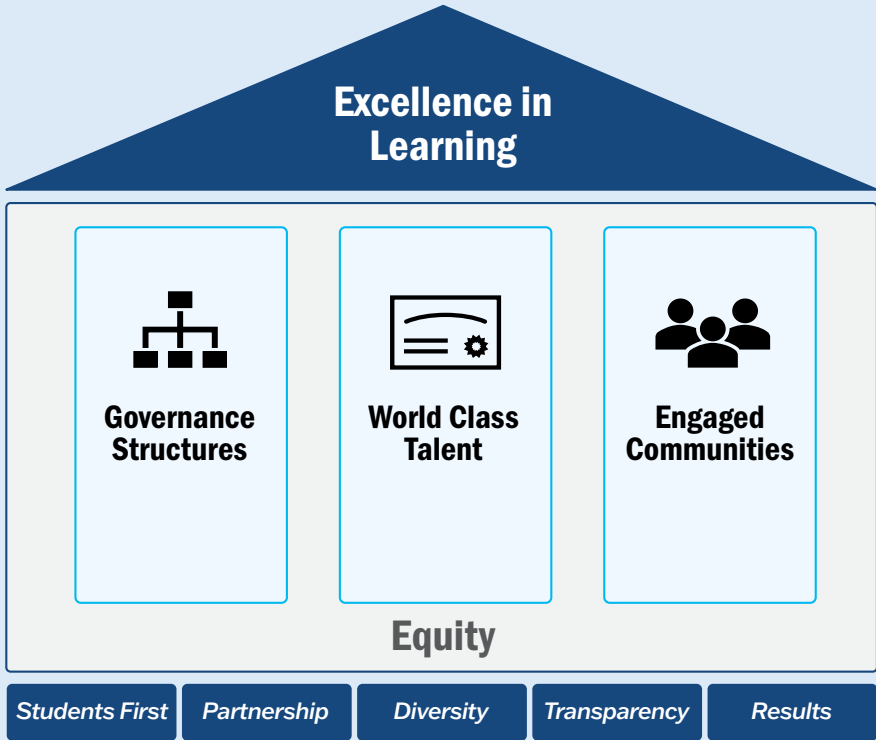
We set ambitious statewide expectations for academic achievement and social, emotional, and behavioral health. We support districts and empower families to meet these goals. We regularly monitor progress toward our goals and adjust our approach as needed to improve services for students and communities.

Priority Framework:

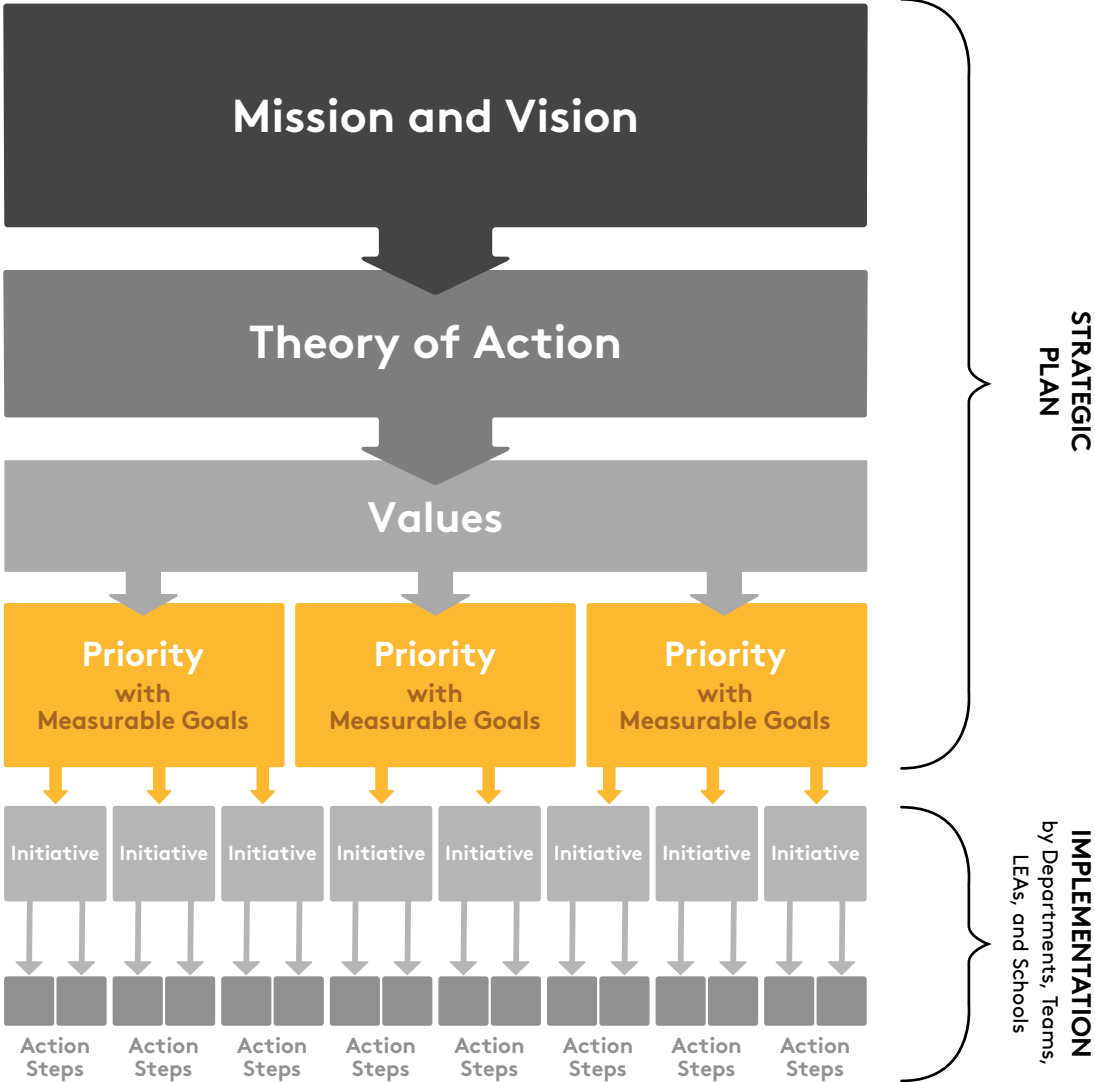


Priorities

- 1 **Equity**
See page 11
- 2 **Excellence in Learning**
See page 13
- 3 **Engaged Communities**
See page 15
- 4 **World Class Talent**
See page 17
- 5 **Governance Structures**
See page 19



Priority Framework:



1 Equity Priority Statement and Goals

Education systems have a responsibility to identify and dismantle the root causes of educational inequity so that all students regardless of race, language, socioeconomic status, ability, or other identities have access to equitable opportunities.

RIDE identifies and works to dismantle the root causes of institutional and structural inequities in its programming and services. RIDE reshapes policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that lead to inequitable outcomes for students based on their race, language, ability, socioeconomic status, or other identities. All RIDE staff are responsible for evaluating the daily decisions that impact schools and students, ensuring these decisions further equity and reduce bias. RIDE collectively builds strong habits of challenging the status quo using a shared definition of equity and a consistent process for evaluation. RIDE takes collective responsibility for monitoring outcomes, adapting practices, and sharing information back with stakeholders. RIDE removes barriers that prevent stakeholders from participating in this process, and progress monitors and adapts this cycle if goals are not met.

February 2022 update: The baselines for these goals laid out in this plan reflect data from before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic continues to have a significant effect on these metrics, and as such RIDE may revisit goals and timelines in light of that impact.

Commitments:

- 1.** RIDE advocates for a funding formula that distributes resources equitably based on student, school, and community needs.
- 2.** RIDE provides tools that allow schools to innovate, implement best practices, and seek out efficiencies so that funds are used to improve outcomes for historically underserved students, including multilingual learners and differently abled students.
- 3.** RIDE develops and disseminates diversity, equity, and inclusion training and resources for all state educators, and partners with LEAs to ensure that resources are leveraged at the district level.
- 4.** RIDE creates conditions that allow all LEAs to recruit and retain experienced teachers and school leaders that reflect the ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity of their student population.
- 5.** RIDE uses a consistent process to evaluate the impact of formal policy decisions on schools and students, applying an equity lens.

Measurable Goals:

- 1.** By July 2027, all students in every LEA will achieve at least one year's worth of learning annually based on the Student Growth Index.
- 2.** By July 2027, the gap in the percent of inexperienced teachers and school leaders in high and low poverty schools will close. To achieve this goal, the share of inexperienced teachers in high poverty schools will decrease from 21% to 12%. The share of inexperienced school leaders in high poverty schools will decrease from 29% to 25%.
- 3.** By June 2021, 100% of RIDE teams will use the Equity Decision Making Tool as a consistent, explicit step in teams' formal decision-making practices as measured by a staff survey and leader observations.

2 Excellence in Learning Priority and Goals

All students are able to learn and grow. It is the job of educators systemwide to provide tools, opportunities, and environments that support student learning and the development of the whole child.

As an agency, RIDE's core mission is to create an educational landscape that supports student learning. To achieve this mission, RIDE creates the conditions for LEAs to build and implement a world-class Pre-K to 12 educational system that is rooted in rigorous standards, aligned curriculum and instruction, experiential learning opportunities, and ongoing assessment. RIDE bases its policy and programming decisions on the belief that all students can learn and develop as well-rounded individuals. To do this, RIDE sets high expectations for comprehensive social and emotional learning, the promotion of multilingualism, and the creation of pathways for students to identify and pursue strengths and interests. RIDE then partners with LEAs and schools to ensure they are well-equipped to meet these expectations, with the end goal of improving student learning.

February 2022 update: The baselines for these goals laid out in this plan reflect data from before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic continues to have a significant effect on these metrics, and as such RIDE may revisit goals and timelines in light of that impact.

Commitments:

1. RIDE provides support and resources that allow every district to adopt and implement high-quality curriculum materials.
2. RIDE sustains a statewide assessment system that informs professional learning and operational support.
3. RIDE develops and implements policies that have a fundamental goal of closing equity gaps and increasing proficiency for all students, including those who are underserved and diverse learners.
4. RIDE supports LEAs in developing and implementing innovative pathways aligned to students' interests, needs, and careers, and providing opportunities for internships and work experience through Career and Technical Education.
5. RIDE ensures LEAs and schools maintain 21st century learning environments with a blend of physical and digital tools that allow students to develop skills and relationships that will prepare them for success after high school.
6. RIDE partners with LEAs to strengthen school culture and create safe and supportive school environments.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, 75% of students will achieve proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science, as measured by the RICAS, SAT, NGSA, and DLM Alternative assessments, an increase of 35% in ELA, 45% in math, and 44% in science. 20% of students will score at the highest level of proficiency.
2. By July 2027, the percent of students who are chronically absent will decrease by 11 percentage points, from 21% to 10%.
3. By July 2027, the state 4-year graduation rate will increase by 11 percentage points, from 84% to 95%.
4. By July 2027, the percent of students who report a feeling of belonging in their school will increase from 68% to 90% in grades 3- 5, and from 43% to 65% in grades 6 – 12.
5. By July 2027, the percent of students who report they are interested in their classes will increase from 63% to 80% in grades 3 – 5, and from 33% to 60% in grades 6 – 12.

3 Engaged Communities Priority and Goals

Decisions and policies are student-centered and therefore will be made by, and in conjunction with, those closest to the student - families, community members, school administrators, and teachers.

RIDE views stakeholder engagement in the policy development process at the school, LEA, and state level as a foundational principle that drives decision-making, rather than an additive step. As such, RIDE creates the conditions for meaningful family and community engagement at all levels. RIDE ensures that resources released by the state for parents and communities are engaging and widely accessible through the use of clear language and translation options. RIDE develops policies and provides resources that build school and LEA capacity to maintain ongoing and intentional community engagement. Through this effort, LEAs will strengthen relationships with families and community members to encourage co-creation of programming that leads to strong results for students. RIDE develops and implements tools that specify the level of involvement stakeholders will have in major decision making within the agency, from being notified of decisions to driving final decisions.

February 2022 update: The baselines for these goals laid out in this plan reflect data from before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic continues to have a significant effect on these metrics, and as such RIDE may revisit goals and timelines in light of that impact.

Commitments:

1. RIDE centers community perspectives in its decision-making processes to determine where to make key investments that improve student learning.
2. RIDE adapts policies and practices to be more student-centered based on feedback from families, communities, and school-based staff.
3. RIDE promotes and provides holistic supports for children and families based on specific needs identified by both the community and the state.
4. RIDE forges outcomes-based partnerships with community organizations and industries to broaden the scope of services for students.
5. RIDE clarifies the entry points through which community members and other stakeholders can play a role in decision making in partnership with the agency, including community meetings, surveys, or other channels.
6. RIDE identifies and communicates, for all major decision making, the level of community involvement that will be required.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, the percent of families who report a favorable opinion of their child's school culture and instructional decisions will increase from 69% to 80%.
2. By July 2027, the percent of families who report they are meaningfully engaged in their child's learning will increase from 69% to 80%.
3. By July 2021, RIDE will set and monitor progress towards an ambitious goal for the use of stakeholder feedback in RIDE decisions to be achieved by July 2027.

4 World Class Talent Priority and Goals

Educators and leaders are valued, reflect the rich diversity of Rhode Island, and are instrumental in promoting student success. Educators are professionals who need support to continuously develop skills and knowledge relevant to the students they teach.

RIDE works with pre-service programs for educators in the state to improve the quality and relevance of certification programs, and to make them more accessible and attractive to a larger pool of future educators. This effort aims to highlight teaching as a viable and competitive field for higher numbers of smart and motivated individuals considering entering the teaching profession. RIDE supports LEAs to develop innovative recruitment and retention programs that elevate the teaching profession and attract a workforce that reflects the diversity of their student body. RIDE provides teachers, schools, and LEAs with professional learning resources that are easily accessible, relevant, and contribute to educators' ongoing development. RIDE partners with LEAs to create strategies to recognize and elevate educators so they are empowered to build long-term careers and take on formal and informal leadership roles. RIDE deploys similar leadership development and career opportunities within the agency itself to encourage commitment to state educational systems.

February 2022 update: The baselines for these goals laid out in this plan reflect data from before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic continues to have a significant effect on these metrics, and as such RIDE may revisit goals and timelines in light of that impact.

Commitments:

- 1.** RIDE supports LEAs in developing strategies to attract, recruit, and retain a highly-skilled and diverse workforce that reflects Rhode Island’s students.
- 2.** RIDE creates flexible pathways into the teaching profession and develops programs aimed to expand and diversify the educator pipeline.
- 3.** RIDE promotes and provides high-quality professional learning for educators and situates professional learning at the center of improvement.
- 4.** RIDE creates conditions that allow for leadership development and opportunities for career advancement for educators at the state, LEA, and school levels.

Measurable Goals:

- 1.** By July 2027, the percent of educators who report they have engaged in professional development opportunities that are valuable and relevant will increase. This growth will be reflected in a 45% to 80% increase for teachers, a 47% to 80% increase for support professionals, and a 67% to 80% increase for school leaders.
- 2.** By July 2027, the percent of students who report that the teachers in their building are supportive and effective will increase from 80% to 90% in grades 3 – 5 and from 60% to 70% in grades 6 – 12.
- 3.** By July 2021, RIDE will set and monitor progress towards an ambitious recruitment and retention rate for teachers of color across the state to be achieved by July 2027.

5 Governance Structures Priority and Goals

Governance structures—at the school, district, and state level—are built to serve the needs of students and their communities.

RIDE develops educational governance structures, including frameworks to delineate decision making authority, regulations, procedures, and guidelines, that first and foremost serve students and support learning. RIDE sets a high bar for educational excellence in the state, then equips LEAs and schools with the policy guidance and technical assistance needed to drive towards this high bar. As needed, RIDE provides differentiated support to districts to improve student outcomes. RIDE promotes school-based management by empowering school leaders to make decisions. To do this, RIDE provides school leaders with clear research and evidence to inform decision-making. RIDE establishes mechanisms for effective two-way communication with LEAs and schools so that student needs motivate changes in state and local supports. These changes are communicated clearly and quickly from the state down to schools. RIDE develops consistent methods to listen to and evaluate student, school, and community needs, which then drive programmatic and policy decisions.

February 2022 update: The baselines for these goals laid out in this plan reflect data from before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic continues to have a significant effect on these metrics, and as such RIDE may revisit goals and timelines in light of that impact.

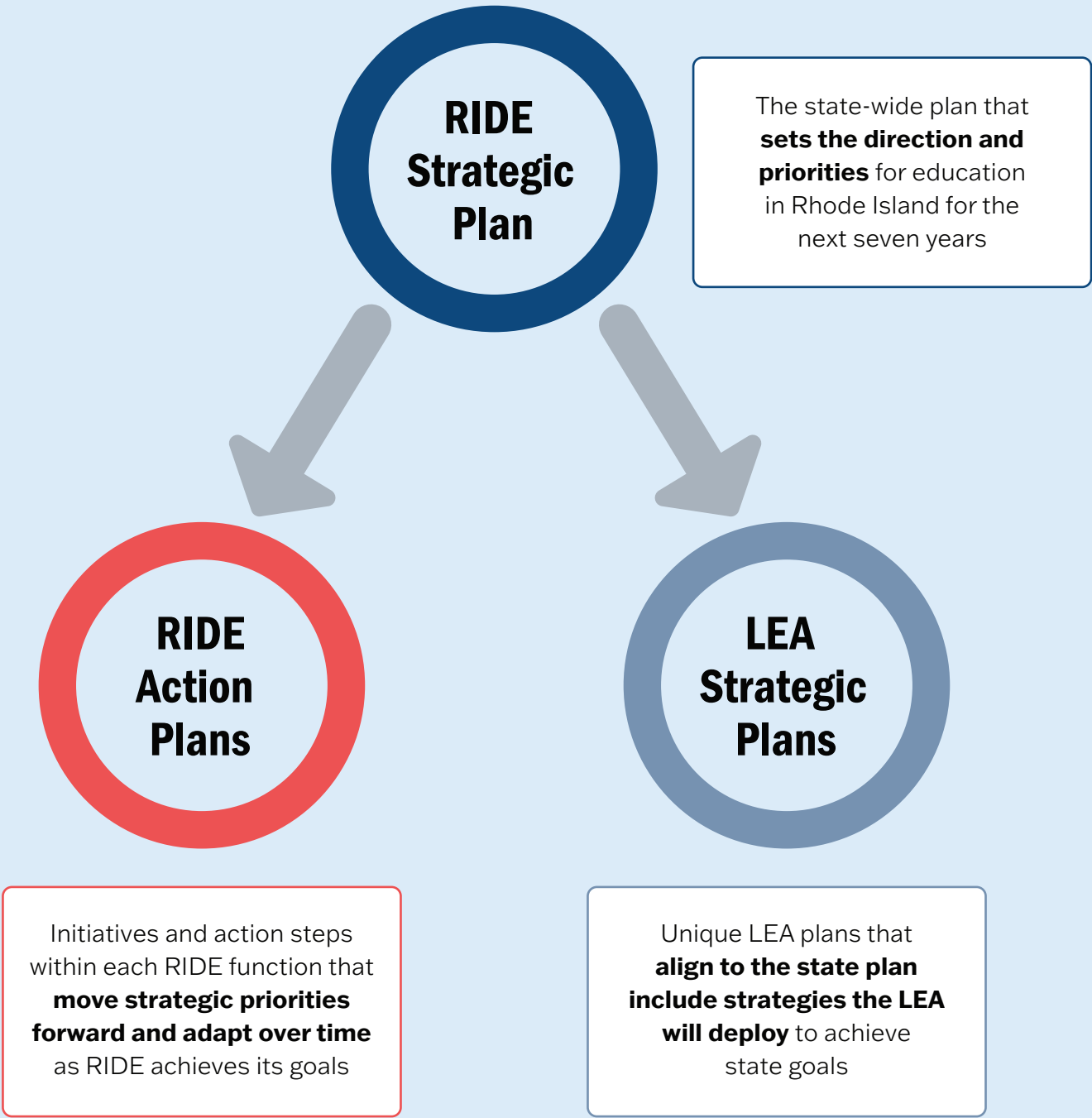
Commitments:

- 1.** RIDE sets high expectations for how LEAs will serve students and families and provides LEAs with the guidance and resources needed to meet these expectations.
- 2.** RIDE equips school leaders with the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about how students are supported.
- 3.** RIDE maintains clear communication with LEAs, schools, and communities. RIDE shares information with LEAs that is timely, consistent, and comprehensive.
- 4.** RIDE is nimble in using feedback to adjust policies, resource allocations, and decision making to best meet student needs.

Measurable Goals:

- 1.** By July 2027, the percent of school leaders who report that they have the autonomy and information to make key decisions around scheduling, resource allocation, and hiring and assigning staff will increase from 75% to 85%.
- 2.** By July 2027, the percent of families that report they are involved in key school improvement decisions will increase from 41% to 50%.
- 3.** By July 2021, RIDE will set and monitor progress towards a goal for the percentage of LEA leaders that believe RIDE is timely and effective in its responsiveness, to be achieved by July 2027.

Implementation Roadmap





RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education



RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

PrepareRI: A Unified Action Plan for College & Career Readiness

Background

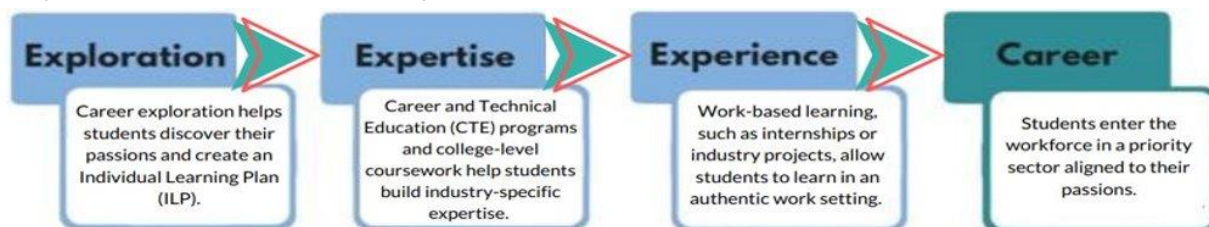
PrepareRI is a statewide initiative launched in 2017 to prepare Rhode Island youth for success in college *and* career. There is not an either/or choice between college and career. Rather, students should be prepared for both, so they can make an authentic, well-informed choice between entering the postsecondary pathway or career of their choice upon graduation.

PrepareRI benefits our students, businesses, and economy. For students, PrepareRI aims to close the gap between what students learn in school and what they need for in-demand jobs. For businesses, PrepareRI ensures that employers have the workforce they require to thrive in the economy of tomorrow.

Statewide structures for college and career readiness should be aligned to real-world experiences and industries. These structures should connect seamlessly to serve students' needs, so that the hand-offs between different systems and agencies are invisible to students. To that end, PrepareRI is managed jointly by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), and the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB). This cross-agency team partners with Rhode Island's employers and communities so that the state can leverage its collective strength to achieve ambitious goals for students.

The original action plan, PrepareRI 1.0, spanned the years 2017 to 2021.¹ This new plan, PrepareRI 2.0, covers the years 2022 to 2027, and aligns with the strategic plans for RIDE and OPC.

Sequence for Skill Development



¹ The original PrepareRI plan's end date was 2020, but this was extended to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joint Goals for 2022 – 2027

	Middle School	High School	Postsecondary	Opportunity Youth
Academic Readiness	Academic Readiness: 75% of youth considering entering the postsecondary system are prepared to take credit-bearing courses at colleges in Rhode Island			
Career and College Knowledge	<p>College & Career Exploration: 80% of students have created goals for high school through the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), explored a college in Rhode Island, and demonstrated growth in career knowledge</p>	<p>College & Career Plan: 80% of students have created a plan for college or career through the Individual Learning Plan (ILP)</p>	<p><i>The postsecondary focus should be on ensuring students participate in experiential learning (see box below) that is aligned to employment opportunities in their selected field of study and can count toward their graduation credits.</i></p>	<p>Reengagement: 50% of opportunity youth are reengaged into one of three systems: K-12, postsecondary, or workforce</p>
Employment Prep	<p><i>The middle school focus should be on exploration (see box above). The employment prep goals are focused on high school and postsecondary.</i></p>	<p>Diploma Plus: 75% of high school graduates have earned a diploma plus college credit or an industry credential</p> <p>Work-based Learning: 75% of high school graduates have completed a high-quality work-based learning opportunity</p>	<p>Degrees: 70% of Rhode Islanders have obtained a postsecondary degree or credential</p> <p>Work-based Learning: 75% of all postsecondary students are earning credit for work-based learning / experiential learning experiences</p>	<p>Employment: 70% of youth WIOA participants are in unsubsidized employment two quarters after exit</p>





Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Postsecondary Education 2022-2027



Rhode Island Office of the
Postsecondary Commissioner

Shannon W. Gilkey, EdD, Commissioner

Note from Commissioner Shannon Gilkey

Dear Community:

For two years, the world has dealt with the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rhode Island higher education community, faced with challenges that were unimaginable prior to the pandemic, has weathered the storm with a steadfast commitment to serving our students. Institutions of higher learning successfully prioritized safety and students, faculty, and staff adjusted to learning and working in new ways.

The pandemic's strain on Rhode Island's postsecondary system, however, is impossible to ignore. Similar to their counterparts across the country, several RI higher education institutions saw a drop in undergraduate enrollment since the start of the pandemic. At the same time, while workers who may have lost a job or desired to upskill increased the demand for educational and workforce training opportunities, disproportionate impacts of the pandemic made the transition difficult for our most vulnerable communities.

I am excited about the development of this strategic plan and the opportunity to put this plan into action. Developed after months of engagement with Rhode Island institutions of higher education, workforce training partners, Board of Education members, students, municipal and state elected leadership, sister state agencies, and nonprofit and business leaders, this is a plan that represents the collective voice of our stakeholder community. Rhode Islanders have spoken about what they would like to see from their postsecondary education system and this plan directly responds to that mandate.

This strategic plan sets forth an ambitious and forward-thinking vision for Rhode Island's postsecondary education system. It is now up to all of us to put this plan into motion. While the OPC team is ready to lead the work outlined in the plan, we will not be successful without the collaboration of our stakeholders. This is Rhode Island's plan for postsecondary education; let's get to work on this plan together.

Sincerely,



Dr. Shannon Gilkey
Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Note from Council on Postsecondary Education Chair Timothy J. DelGiudice

Dear Community:

On behalf of the Council on Postsecondary Education, I am pleased to present Rhode Island's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan for Postsecondary Education.

The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) led the development of this plan, after an extensive outreach and engagement process that asked Rhode Islanders what they wanted and needed from their postsecondary education system. The result is a plan that will:

- ◆ close equity gaps,
- ◆ increase affordability,
- ◆ help more adults attain degrees and certifications,
- ◆ expand workforce training opportunities, and
- ◆ strengthen PK – 20 alignment.

We look forward to keeping the Rhode Island community updated on the progress of the plan, both celebrating our successes and holding ourselves accountable when necessary. I am excited to embark upon this work with the OPC team and all its partners throughout the state to help more Rhode Islanders reach their postsecondary goals.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. DelGiudice
Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Enhanced Coordination and Efficiency (Statutory Duties).....	Page 30
Strategic Plan.....	Page 31
Mission.....	Page 32
Theory of Action	Page 32
Values.....	Page 33
Priorities with Measurable Goals	Page 34

ENHANCED POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM COORDINATION AND EFFICIENCY

OPC will perform its statutory duties in a manner that enhances coordination and efficiency

Data Analysis, Reporting, and Transparency

Systematically gather, process, and analyze information on all aspects of postsecondary education in Rhode Island, including identifying current and future needs. [16-59-6(1)]

Policy Development

Formulate broad policy to implement the goals and objectives established and adopted by the Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education, promoting coordination between public and independent higher education, PreK-12 education, and other stakeholders. [16-59-6(3)], [16-59-6(4)]

Regulatory and Administration

Administer policies, rules, and regulations of the Council on Postsecondary Education including those duties relating to independent higher education institutions. [16-59-6(10)], [16-59-6(11)]

Strategic Planning

Develop a strategic plan encompassing the broad goals and objectives for the state's higher education system aligned with those of the Board of Education and the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, and with the activities of the independent higher education sector, where feasible, including a 5-year strategic funding plan. [16-59-6(2)], [16-59-6(6)]

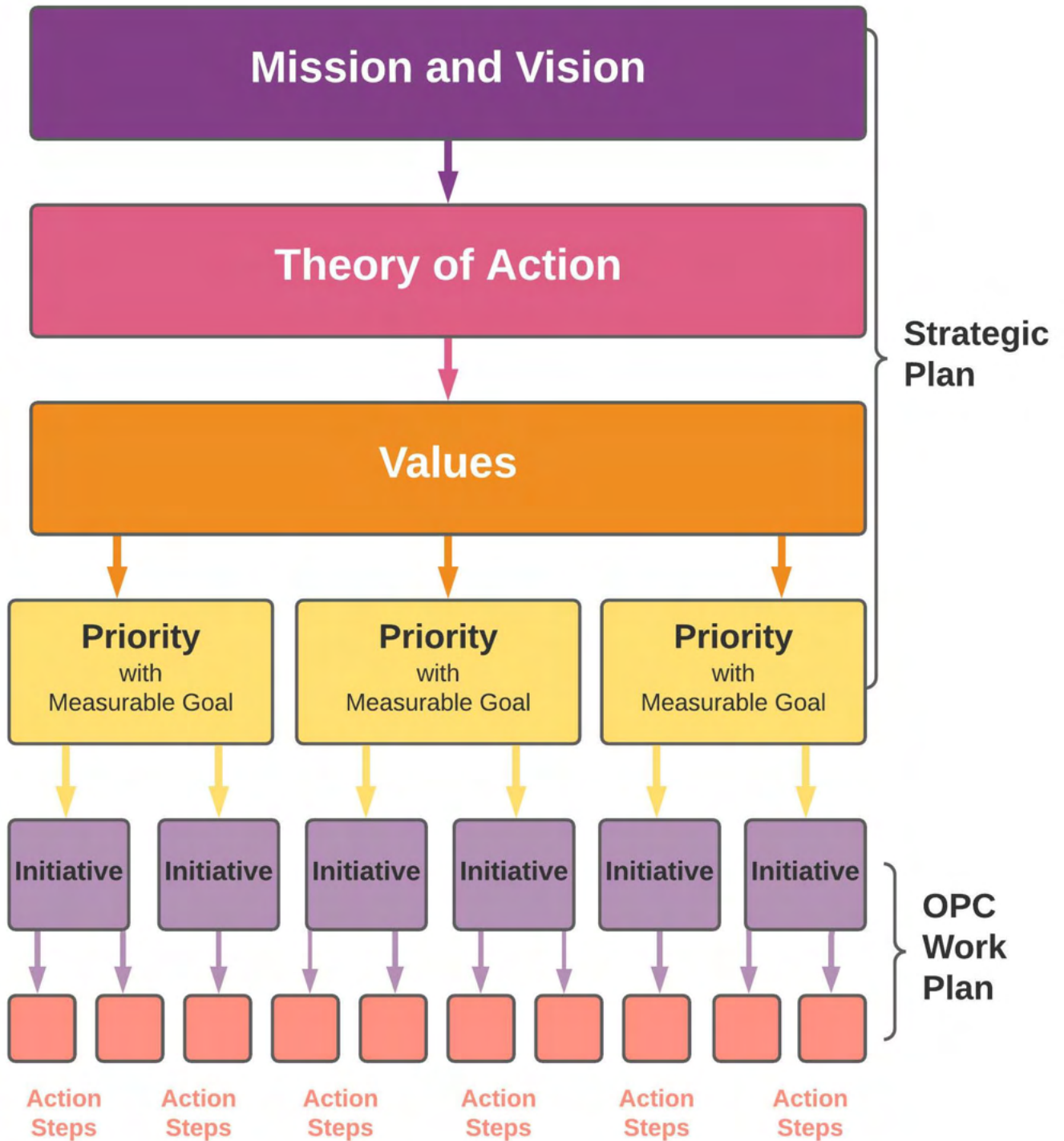
Fiscal Management

Assist in budget preparation for public higher education, prepare system-wide standard accounting procedures, and provide leadership on financial planning, budgeting, compliance, and other policy issues. [16-59-6(4)], [16-59-6(12)]

Policy Recommendation and Program Implementation

Make recommendations to the Council on Postsecondary Education regarding system policy and programmatic operations and carry out the Council's policies and priorities. [16-59-6(7)], [16-59-6(8)], [16-59-6(9)], [16-59-6(13)]

STRATEGIC PLAN



MISSION

The mission of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner is to ensure, promote, and expand postsecondary attainment among all Rhode Islanders by providing an effective system of postsecondary education and workforce training that is high quality, equitable, accessible, affordable, and aligned to PK-12 education and the economy. Rhode Island's system of postsecondary education should foster the economic, civic, social, and cultural growth of all Rhode Islanders, their communities, and the state.

THEORY OF ACTION

If OPC:

- Leads collaborative statewide efforts to reach Rhode Island's attainment goal of 70% of adults having a postsecondary credential by centering equity and alignment,
- Develops policies and practices that enable more Rhode Islanders to achieve postsecondary success, and
- Understands the State's current and future economic and workforce needs and partners with educational, workforce, and industry training programs to serve the Rhode Island economy

Then OPC can:

- Support institutions of higher education and policy makers to meet the needs of both our postsecondary students and our workforce partners
- Clear pathways to success for many more students, particularly from underrepresented communities

So that:

All students are well-positioned and receive robust supports to reach their postsecondary goals.

VALUES

Acting in the Best Interest of Students

Our work is conducted through the lens of what best serves our postsecondary students. We are intentional about incorporating student voice into our practices and policies. We support programming at our state's institutions of higher education, workforce training programs, and industry partners to ensure that all learners are equipped to support their families and their communities.

Collaboration and Inclusiveness

We understand that collaboration multiplies our efforts and makes us stronger and believe an effective collective impact model across the state's institutions of higher education holds the best promise to achieve scaled outcomes. We welcome and seek partners who share our vision and goals to add their contributions to ensure greater success.

Transparency

We make available up-to-date, accurate, and accessible information to our stakeholder community so the state of Rhode Island, our organization, and our partners can make data-informed decisions in furtherance of our mission and strategic goals.

Continuous Learning and Improvement

We use quantitative and qualitative data to make data-informed decisions in an ongoing effort to improve our programs, practices, processes, and services by increasing quality, strengthening our impact, and improving efficiency.

PRIORITIES

Equity

OPC recognizes that persistent gaps exist for students in Rhode Island’s postsecondary education system along the lines of race, ethnicity, immigration status, language, socioeconomic status, gender, and other identities. We are committed to uncovering and **dismantling any systemic inequities embedded in policies and practices** that hold back our students, communities, and the state from reaching their full potential. OPC designs and implements our work through an equity lens that demands that our efforts remove barriers to success for underrepresented students.

Commitments

- ◆ OPC will support postsecondary education and workforce training programs as they focus their efforts on students from underrepresented communities.
- ◆ OPC will lead a collaborative statewide effort to examine how policies and practices contribute to disproportionate disadvantages for underrepresented populations and provide recommendations for improvement.
- ◆ In partnership with state, community, and postsecondary education leaders, faculty, staff, and students, OPC will examine collective impact strategies to improve and increase student support services across the Rhode Island postsecondary system.

Measurable Goals

- ◆ By June 2023, OPC will lead the revisions of the Council on Postsecondary Education’s equity policy and the development of an equity action plan for the RI postsecondary system.
- ◆ By June 2023, OPC, in partnership with institutions of higher education, will complete a system-wide initiative to revise and expand the state’s approach to student transfer from its two-year college to four-year institutions.
- ◆ By December 2023, 100% of OPC staff will have participated in diversity, equity, and inclusion professional development.
- ◆ By December 2023, OPC will develop and recommend to the Council strategies to enhance enrollment and retention efforts at each of the public colleges.
- ◆ By June 2025, OPC will lead a statewide equity policy and practice review to remove systemic barriers that disproportionately affect communities of color and other underrepresented groups.

Affordability

OPC recognizes that affordability is a significant barrier to entry to and completion of higher education programs for many Rhode Islanders. Students and their families struggle to shoulder the financial burden of attendance, including not only tuition and fees, but also costs associated with books, housing, transportation, childcare, and other of life's responsibilities. OPC believes that the lack of affordable options should not be the reason students fail to reach their postsecondary goals. OPC is committed to working to **increase financial resources for students and connecting every student in need with the supports** they need to succeed.

Commitments

- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will develop strategies to connect students with resources that can help bridge affordability gaps.
- ◆ OPC will study the equity and affordability implications of expanding state-funded scholarship programs.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's public institutions of higher education, OPC will lead the development of a predictable funding policy for the public higher education system.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will propose system efficiency strategies to ensure public resources are utilized to drive student outcomes and state priorities.

Measurable Goals

- ◆ By December 2023, OPC will report to state policy makers on the implications of expanding state-funded scholarship programs.
- ◆ By December 2024, OPC will develop a predictable funding policy for consideration by the State Legislature.
- ◆ By June 2027, the statewide FAFSA completion rate will be at 80% among graduating high school students, demonstrating measurable progress each year.
- ◆ By June 2027, OPC will measure, evaluate, and advance private investment in student outcomes, and establish a system-wide public/private investment strategy that supports Rhode Island students.

Adult Success

OPC recognizes that a growing number of today's postsecondary students are adults returning to academic and training settings to earn degrees and credentials needed for their career aspirations. This expanding pool of students is typically working at least part-time, live independently, and may care for dependents. OPC recognizes the need to address the challenges that adult learners face in pursuing their academic and workforce training goals while navigating financial, time management, basic needs, and other challenges. OPC is committed to **increasing adult postsecondary completion** by removing systemic and structural barriers to enrollment, persistence, and completion. OPC is committed to supporting institutions of higher education and industry partners in creating pathways for adult students that provide both short-term credentials and longer-term degree completion

Commitments

- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will focus on enrollment and completion efforts with underrepresented adult communities in workforce development programs, specifically focusing on military veterans, immigrants, and those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will advocate for the expansion of and sustainable funding for navigation services and wraparound supports for adult students.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will lead a coordinated statewide strategy to ensure that state policies support adult learners enrolled in higher education or workforce training programs.
- ◆ In partnership with the nonprofit community and RI's institutions for higher education, OPC will coordinate a statewide strategy to align and scale up student services that support smooth transitions for adults into postsecondary education and training.
- ◆ OPC will partner with government agencies and community partners to identify and engage underemployed adults.

Measurable Goals

- ◆ By June 2023, OPC will conduct a gap-analysis of the support structures for adults and offer recommendations for improvement for policy makers.
- ◆ By December 2023, OPC will develop a credential registry to assist adult learners in enrolling in educational and workforce training programs.
- ◆ By June 2024, OPC, in partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, will coordinate the development of a statewide strategy for credit attainment through prior learning assessments and course completions.
- ◆ By June 2024, OPC, in partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, will develop and coordinate a system-wide process through its RI Reconnect program to reengage students with some college and no degree.
- ◆ OPC will work with the nonprofit community to align and advance student services that support smooth transitions for adults into postsecondary education and training.

Alignment with State's Workforce and Economic Development Priorities

Rhode Island has set an ambitious goal that 70% of working-age adults will obtain a postsecondary credential by 2025. OPC recognizes the importance of short-term credentials, delivered by our institutions of higher education and other training partners, that align to Rhode Island's current and future economies. OPC will work with industry partners, educators, and community leaders to **improve and expand pathways for students that lead to living wage careers**. OPC is committed to coordination the development of new opportunities in education and career training that meet the needs of an expanding adult student body and industries striving to grow.

Commitments

- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will recommend to the Council on Postsecondary Education workforce strategies where higher education can assist in closing workforce gaps
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will connect industry partners, educators, and community leaders to build a talented workforce to support our state's priority sectors.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will lead the development of a statewide strategy to expand pathways that include short-term credentialing that align to two and four-year degrees.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education, OPC will lead the development of a statewide strategy to expand pathways that include short-term credentialing with credit acquisition.
- ◆ In partnership with RI's institutions of higher education and industry partners, OPC will focus specifically on expanding opportunities for underrepresented communities, including Black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), immigrants, justice-involved, and low-income adults.

Measurable Goals

- ◆ By December 2022, OPC will have workforce training programming at its three education centers (Providence, Westerly, and Woonsocket).
- ◆ By June 2023, OPC, in collaboration with state partners, will develop a plan to improve the state's longitudinal data system to provide better information on career pathways and outcomes.
- ◆ By June 2023, OPC will develop and implement a process with industry partners and government agencies to understand and address current and future workforce gaps.
- ◆ By June 2027, OPC will facilitate the enrollment of three thousand underemployed Rhode Islanders, including BIPOC, immigrant, justice-involved, and low-income students, in workforce training programs.

Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions

Too many Rhode Island high school students graduate academically unprepared for college credit-bearing coursework. OPC recognizes the importance of collaboration across the PK-12 education, higher education, and workforce training spaces to ensure students' preparedness to persist in the variety of postsecondary pathways. OPC recognizes the importance of career and technical education that leads to a career pathway and postsecondary credit. **PrepareRI, Rhode Island's interagency (with RIDE and DLT) initiative** can ensure that all students are prepared for college and career.

Commitments

- ◆ OPC will work with government agencies and our state's colleges and universities to ensure alignment in policies and priorities between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.
- ◆ OPC will work with government agencies, local municipalities, and business partners to boost FAFSA participation, dual and concurrent enrollment, and other initiatives designed to better prepare students for postsecondary success.
- ◆ OPC will work with the nonprofit community to align and advance student services that support smooth transitions into postsecondary education.

Measurable Goals

- ◆ By June 2025, OPC, in collaboration with RIDE, will increase students participating in early college opportunities by 10%.
- ◆ By June 2027, OPC will help to close racial completion gaps in early college opportunities by 25% through increasing access and participation in programs such as, but not limited to, dual and concurrent enrollment and AP coursework and exams.

Commitments:

1. RIDE provides support and resources that allow every district to adopt and implement high-quality curriculum materials.
2. RIDE sustains a statewide assessment system that informs professional learning and operational support.
3. RIDE develops and implements policies that have a fundamental goal of closing equity gaps and increasing proficiency for all students, including those who are underserved and diverse learners.
4. RIDE supports LEAs in developing and implementing innovative pathways aligned to students' interests, needs, and careers, and providing opportunities for internships and work experience through Career and Technical Education.
5. RIDE ensures LEAs and schools maintain 21st century learning environments with a blend of physical and digital tools that allow students to develop skills and relationships that will prepare them for success after high school.
6. RIDE partners with LEAs to strengthen school culture and create safe and supportive school environments.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, 75% of students will achieve proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science, as measured by the RICAS, SAT, NGSA, and DLM Alternative assessments, an increase of 35% in ELA, 45% in math, and 44% in science. 20% of students will score at the highest level of proficiency.
2. By July 2027, the percent of students who are chronically absent will decrease by 11 percentage points, from 21% to 10%.
3. By July 2027, the state 4-year graduation rate will increase by 11 percentage points, from 84% to 95%.
4. By July 2027, the percent of students who report a feeling of belonging in their school will increase from 68% to 90% in grades 3- 5, and from 43% to 65% in grades 6 – 12.
5. By July 2027, the percent of students who report they are interested in their classes will increase from 63% to 80% in grades 3 – 5, and from 33% to 60% in grades 6 – 12.