

Rhode Island’s Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan: Decision Guide

As Rhode Island prepares to transition to the new federal education law – the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – we have the opportunity to review and revise many current educational policies and practices in our state. The following represents a summary of the key issues we are considering during this transition. The list below outlines major decisions within ESSA, the federal requirements surrounding that decision, and the current practice in Rhode Island. There are also notes on the current status of the decision and discussion opportunities during which the question has been or will be considered by the public. No recommendations or decisions have been finalized at this date.

Decisions are presented in the categories of: [Academic Standards](#); [Assessments](#); [Accountability](#); [Report Cards](#); [School Improvement](#); [Educator Quality](#); [Supports for Equitable Student Achievement](#)

Academic Standards

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status
Should Rhode Island continue to support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as statewide learning standards?	States must provide students with challenging academic learning standards in Math, English Language Arts, and Science. <i>§ 1111(b)(1)(A)</i>	Rhode Island adopted the CCSS in July 2010 and NGSS May 2013.	Recommendation: Maintain alignment with CCSS and NGSS Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16)
Should Rhode Island continue to use its existing proficiency standards for students qualifying as English Language Learners?	States must adopt proficiency standards to support English Language Learners (ELL) that are aligned with statewide academic learning standards <i>§ 1111(b)(1)(F)(i)-(iii)</i>	The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development (ELD) Standards were revised in 2012. Rhode Island has been using the standards since 2004.	Recommendation: Maintain alignment with WIDA ELD
Should Rhode Island continue to use its existing proficiency standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?	States may adopt alternate academic standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities through a documented and validated standards-setting process. <i>§ 1111(b)(1)(E)</i>	Rhode Island administers the Multi-State Alternate Assessment and approved alternate academic standards in 2015 in Mathematics and English Language Arts.	Recommendation: Maintain existing proficiency standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

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Assessments

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status
Should Rhode Island continue to use the PARCC assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics as its state standardized assessment tool for grades 3 through 8?	States are required to implement high quality standardized assessments in English Language Arts and Math every year for students in grades 3 through 8. <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(A)-(B)</i>	Rhode Island began administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) English Language Arts and Math Assessment in the 2015-2016 school year in grades 3 through 8.	Recommendation: Continue to administer PARCC Assessment in English Language Arts and Math for students in grades 3-8 Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16)
What assessment(s) should Rhode Island use to test Science proficiency?	States are required to implement a high quality standardized assessment in Science at least one time between grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12 <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(A)-(B).</i>	Rhode Island currently administers the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science Assessment in grades 4, 8, and 11.	Recommendation: Continue collaboration with other states to develop a new science assessment that is aligned with the currently adopted science standards (NGSS) Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16)
What assessment(s) should Rhode Island use to test English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics proficiency in high school?	States are required to implement a high quality standardized assessment , consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards, in English Language Arts and Mathematics at least once in high school . <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(B)</i>	Rhode Island began administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) English Language Arts and Math Assessment in the 2015-2016 school year in grades 9 and 10 in English Language Arts/Literacy, and Algebra I and Geometry in Mathematics. Rhode Island also will begin paying for all students to take the SAT and PSAT once each in high school.	Currently Under Consideration: Options: (1) Administer PARCC assessments in English Language Arts 9, English Language Arts 10, Algebra I, and Geometry; or (2) Administer PARCC English Language Arts 9 and Algebra I, and SAT in 11 th grade; or (3) Administer PSAT in 10 th grade and SAT in 11 th grade. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16)

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Will Rhode Island offer academic assessments in languages other than English?	States must identify the languages other than English that are spoken by a significant portion of the student population of the State and must indicate which assessments will be offered in these languages. <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(F)(i)</i>	Rhode Island currently offers the PARCC mathematics assessment in Spanish and English.	Recommendation: Rhode Island will continue to offer PARCC assessments in Spanish.
How will Rhode Island ensure that all schools meet the required 95% participation rate for the state assessment program?	States must test all of their students, and if participation rates drop below 95 percent, the federal department of education may take enforcement action against the state. <i>§ 1111(c)(4)(E)</i>	The Rhode Island Department of Education will put a notation on the school’s report card and school cannot attain “Commended” status if 95% of the student body does not participate in the assessment.	Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that increases consequences with multiple years of missing participation rates.
Will Rhode Island exclude some English Learners from the state assessment requirements?	State may choose to exclude English Learners (ELs) who have been enrolled for less than 12 months from one administration of an English Language Arts assessment. <i>§ 1111(b)(3)</i>	Currently, Rhode Island English Learners (ELs) who have been in the United States for less than 12 months are exempt from one administration of the English Language Arts /Literacy assessment.	Recommendation: English Learners (ELs) who have been in the United States for less than 12 months will continue to be exempt from one administration of the English Language Arts/Literacy assessment.
How will Rhode Island assess the English Proficiency of English Learners?	States must administer an annual assessment of English proficiency to all English Learners in all grades. <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(G)</i>	Rhode Island currently administers the ACCESS for ELs in Kindergarten – grade 12.	Recommendation: Rhode Island will continue to administer the ACCESS for ELs in Kindergarten – grade 12.

Accountability

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status
What additional measures should Rhode Island include in the school accountability index, beyond those that are required?	The state accountability index , the composite measure used to classify schools, must include multiple measures for performance, including academic achievement on English Language Arts and math assessments, growth in academic achievement, high school graduation rates, English Language proficiency, and at least one	The following measures are currently included in a Composite Index Score for accountability : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of students that meet or exceed expectation on state assessments • Performance gaps between subgroups of students on the state assessment 	Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that provides a broader picture of student achievement, which may include measures of college and career readiness, student cohort preparedness for transitions, and student chronic absenteeism.

	<p>other additional measure of school success or student support. <i>§ 1111(c)(1)-(5)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in percent of students that meet or exceed expectation on state assessments (Elementary & Middle School) • Graduation rates (High School) 	<p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</p>
<p>Will Rhode Island include multiple measures of high school graduation in the school accountability index?</p>	<p>States must include a measure of how many students graduate in four years in their high school accountability and may include adjusted cohort graduation rates to include students who take five, six or more years to graduation high school. <i>§ 1111(c)(4)(B)</i></p>	<p>Rhode Island currently uses a Composite Graduation Rate measure that is a weighted average of four-, five- and six-year graduation rates.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Continue to use a composite graduation rate measure that includes the four-, five- and six-year graduation rates.</p>
<p>How will Rhode Island include a measure of English Proficiency in its accountability index?</p>	<p>States must set an expected level of growth in English Proficiency for English Learners and include student results on the English Proficiency assessment within its accountability index. <i>§ 1111(c)(4)(A)-(B)</i></p>	<p>Rhode Island does not currently include English Proficiency in its accountability index.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed for accountability that includes student performance on the English Language Proficiency assessment (likely, ACCESS).</p>
<p>What should the minimum number of students be in a federal accountability subgroup?</p>	<p>States must collect data on federally-identified student subgroups, under ESSA, including the “new” subgroups of homeless, foster, and military-affiliated youth. All metrics within the accountability index must be disaggregated based on these subgroups and each state must identify the minimum number of students for subgroups to be included in accountability and reporting. <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi)</i> <i>§ 1111(h)(1)(C)</i></p>	<p>Rhode Island currently requires a minimum of 20 students within any one student group to include that student group within the accountability index for the school.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Continue to require a minimum of 20 students for a subgroup to be included within the accountability index.</p>
<p>How will accountability data be used to sort and categorize public schools? How will the index be used to identify schools in need of support and</p>	<p>Based on the performances of schools on the state accountability index, states are required to “meaningfully differentiate” public schools,</p>	<p>Rhode Island currently calculates a Composite Index Score using the accountability metrics and ranks scores to categorize schools.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed to identify only the lowest-performing schools.</p>

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improvement?	<p>annually. States must specifically identify the lowest-performing 5% of schools for comprehensive support and improvement and, for those with consistently underperforming subgroups, targeted support and improvement.</p> <p><i>§ 1111(h)(1)(C)-(D)</i></p>	<p><u>Classification</u> labels for the 2015-16 school year will include Priority, Focus, and Commended.</p>	<p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</p>
<p>What academic and graduation rate goals and benchmarks should the state establish for all Rhode Island students and schools?</p>	<p>States must establish “ambitious State-designed long term goals” with measurements of interim progress for all students and federally-identified student subgroups. The goals must be tied to academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency, and may include other measures.</p> <p><i>§ 1111(c)(4)(A)</i></p>	<p>During the transition to ESSA, states are not required to have annual targets or long term targets.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that includes long term goals and interim measures of progress that are both ambitious and attainable, such as postsecondary success measures and percent of students earning diploma recognitions.</p> <p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (1/25/17)</p>

Report Cards

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status
<p>What should be included in school-level report cards?</p>	<p>States must design and produce annually a report of each school’s performance, including, but not limited to, metrics within the state-defined accountability index and any classification that it receives. States must make this information accessible to parents and community members and it should be easily understood by the general population.</p> <p><i>§ 1111(h)(2)(A)-(C)</i></p>	<p>Rhode Island currently produces <u>report cards for each school</u> that includes all the data included in the Composite Index Score for accountability, assessment participation rates, and the school’s current classification.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that includes performance on the school accountability metrics and classification as well as broader measures of school performance.</p> <p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</p>

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What should be included in LEA (district)-level report cards?	States are required to design and publish an annual report card on districts' performance and it must include a variety of components, including, but not limited to, an aggregate of all LEA's schools' performance. <i>§ 1111(h)(2)(A)-(C)</i>	Rhode Island currently produces report cards for each LEA (district) that includes all the data included in the Composite Index Score aggregated by school level (elementary, middle, high) and the current classification for each school in the district..	Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that includes aggregate performance on the LEA schools as well as broader measures of LEA performance. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)
What should be included in the state-level report cards?	States are required to design a state-level report card , to be published annually that monitors progress against the state goals and interim benchmarks, and can include other measures of the state's choice. <i>§ 1111(h)(1)(A)-(C)</i>	Rhode Island currently produces report cards for entire state that includes all the data included in the Composite Index Score aggregated by school level (elementary, middle, high) for all students in the state.	Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that includes aggregate performance of all students, progress against interim goals, and broader measures of state-level performance. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)
How and in what format should report cards be published?	States are required to report in a manner and format that is accessible to parents and community members. <i>§ 1111(h)(1)(B)</i> <i>§ 1111(h)(2)(B)</i>	School, LEA, and state-level report cards are currently posted on the RIDE website annually .	Recommendation: Continue to post static school, LEA, and state-level report cards on the RIDE website annually in both English and Spanish with a plan to transition to dynamic (interactive) report cards as soon as possible. Report card should be dynamic to include multiple layers of data. RIDE will ensure LEAs have the means to disseminate the information widely to parents and community members. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)

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School Improvement

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status
How should RIDE support LEAs with schools identified for improvement?	The state must provide technical assistance to each LEA serving a significant number of schools identified for either comprehensive or targeted support. <i>§ 1111(d)(3)(A)</i>	Currently, RIDE provides technical assistance and facilitates meetings with LEAs and schools to review school improvement plans.	Currently Taking Input Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (10/19/16)
What should be required of LEAs within their improvement plans for schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted support?	LEAs must develop evidence-based improvement plans for all schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted support. All plans must be developed in partnership with stakeholders (ex: principles, teachers, parents) and must address deficiencies in student performance and other metrics within the accountability index. Schools identified for comprehensive support must also include a needs assessment, identify resource inequities, and have their improvement plan approved by the school, LEA, and state. <i>§ 1111(d)(2)(B)</i>	Currently, identified schools in Rhode Island are required to develop an annual plan informed by multi-year intervention strategies, chosen from a list provided by the state, and annual targets set by the LEAs.	Currently Taking Input
How will RI allocate available federal funds to support LEAs with schools in need of targeted or comprehensive support? Will grants be competitive or formula?	States may set aside federal funds (up to 7% of Title I) to allocate to LEAs to support schools implementing targeted or comprehensive support initiatives. States may allocate these funds on a formula or competitive basis and may define funding criteria. States and LEAs have flexibility on how these funds may be used, rather than on pre-determined federal school improvement models. <i>§ 1003(a)-(b)</i>	Rhode Island annually sets aside up to 4% of Title 1 and allocates these funds (1003a) on a formula basis to support school improvement at low-performing schools. Historically, Rhode Island has also allocated school improvement grants (1003g – which are no longer available in ESSA), as available, on a competitive basis for schools to implement pre-defined school improvement models.	Currently Taking Input

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<p>How can schools exit identification as needing improvement, and what are the consequences for schools that don't?</p>	<p>States must create exit criteria for schools identified as needing either targeted or comprehensive support and improvement. States must also take rigorous action if a school identified for comprehensive support has not met state-established exit criteria within a state-identified period of time (not to exceed four years). States may also initiate additional improvement strategies in any LEA with a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support that do not meet the exit criteria. § 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)</p>	<p>Rhode Island's current exit criteria for "Focus" or "Priority" schools are, respectively, two or three consecutive years of receiving an index score greater than or equal to 50. Rhode Island has continued to support schools with their transformation efforts if they have not yet met the exit criteria</p>	<p>Currently Taking Input</p> <p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (10/19/16)</p>
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Educator Quality

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status
<p>How will Rhode Island ensure and measure that low-income and minority children are not served by ineffective, out-of-field, and/or inexperienced teachers?</p>	<p>States are required to identify the measures they will use to determine the proportion of low-income and minority students being served by inexperienced teachers. § 1111(g)(1)(B)</p>	<p>RIDE's plan for ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators was approved by USDoE. Many task level strategies were implemented this year by the Educator Excellence team</p>	<p>Currently Taking Input</p> <p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (11/30/16)</p>
<p>What can Rhode Island do to support a robust human capital strategy, including preparation, recruitment, evaluation, support, professional growth, and advancement to ensure high quality teachers are available for all students?</p>	<p>Resources will be provided to states and school districts to implement activities to support teachers, paraprofessionals, and other educators. School leaders will have the authority to make staffing decisions that meet the needs of the school. § 2103(b)(3) § 2212(e)(2)(C)</p>	<p>RIDE has revised its standards for preparation programs and is implementing a revised approval process to ensure quality and provide feedback for improvement.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed for an outline of steps to achieve a state-wide vision of high performing systems of preparation, recruitment, support, evaluation and advancement. Educator evaluation work with the field will also receive additional attention.</p> <p>Discussion:</p>

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			Committee of Practitioners (11/30/16)
What can Rhode Island do to support a robust human capital strategy, including preparation, recruitment, evaluation, support, professional growth, and advancement to ensure high quality leaders are placed in every school?	Resources will be provided to states and school districts to implement activities to support leaders . School leaders will have the authority to make staffing decisions that meet the needs of the school. <i>§ 2103(b)(3)</i> <i>§2212(e)(2)(C)</i>	RIDE does not currently have a state-wide strategy in this area.	Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed for an outline of steps to achieve a state-wide vision of high performing systems of preparation, recruitment, support, evaluation and advancement.
Should Rhode Island utilize a small portion of LEA funds to support state-wide effort to prepare and develop effective school leaders?	Three percent of Title II funding may be designated by states for specific state-level strategies related to the training and development of school leaders . <i>§ 2101(c)(4)(B)</i>	RIDE does not currently have a state-wide strategy in this area.	Currently Taking Input
Should RIDE allow LEAs to utilize their educator quality funding (Title II) to run “academies” to train teachers and leaders within the LEA?	A small portion of Title II funding may be used to establish or expand teacher, principal or other school leader preparation academies run by the LEA. <i>§ 2101(c)(4)(B)(xii)</i>	No such academies exist in Rhode Island at this time.	Currently Taking Input

Supports for Equitable Student Achievement

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Questions Under Consideration	ESSA Requirements	Current Practice in Rhode Island	Decision Status / How to Get Involved
How will Rhode Island support students in typically transient sub-groups?	States must collect data on federally identified student subgroups, under ESSA, including the subgroups of homeless, foster, migratory, and military-affiliated youth . State agencies and schools must collaborate to ensure educational continuity for foster youth and students experiencing homelessness and ensure equitable access to	Approximately 5 districts in Rhode Island are granted funds under the McKinney-Vento act to support students experiencing homelessness. Rhode Island does not currently accept federal funding to support migrant students, and therefore does not track these students separately. Identifying and supporting students in foster care and military-affiliated	Currently Under Consideration: Schools and RIDE will need to work together to update enrollment census data to include all applicable subgroups. A recommendation will be developed to expand and adapt the current support for students experiencing homelessness to include those who are likely to be more transient for other reasons.

	<p>educational services. <i>§ 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi)</i> <i>§ 1111(g)(1)(E)</i> <i>§ 1304(b)(3)</i> <i>§ 4103(c)(2)(C)</i></p>	<p>youth is a new federal requirement.</p>	
<p>How will Rhode Island support students affiliated with the juvenile justice system?</p>	<p>States must ensure the timely re-enrollment of each student who has been placed in the juvenile justice system in secondary school or in a re-entry program. States must provide opportunities for such students to participate in credit-bearing coursework. <i>§ 1414(a)(2)(E)</i></p>	<p>Students who are placed in the juvenile justice system are given opportunities to earn high school credit through the Department of Children, Youth and Families educational programs. At least 15% of funding for these programs is used to support transition and re-entry into high school.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: A recommendation will be developed that ensures collaborative efforts on the part of the juvenile justice system and the school or school district to facilitate timely enrollment, participation in credit-bearing coursework, and graduation.</p>
<p>What will Rhode Island’s criteria be for community-based programs receiving funding under the Title IV Part B 21st Century Community Learning Center grants?</p>	<p>The state will award 21st Century Community Learning Center grants on a competitive basis to support high-quality, effective programs, criteria for which shall take into consideration the likelihood that a proposed community learning center will help participating students meet the State’s challenging academic standards and any local academic standards. The state must give priority to schools identified for targeted or comprehensive support and intervention. <i>§ 4203(a)(5)(A)</i> <i>§ 4204(b)(2)(D)</i> <i>§ 4204(i)(1)(A)</i></p>	<p>Currently, programs receiving 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants must serve students from schools where the majority of students come from low-income families. The grants are awarded based on need, staff quality, program management, evaluation methods, school partner support, and sustainability.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: The grants may be open to programs serving students from any school, with priority to schools with high percentages of students from low-income families or schools identified as in need of support and improvement. Grant criteria may expand to include alignment with school improvement strategies and state performance metrics.</p> <p>Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (12/14/16)</p>
<p>How can per-pupil expenditure data be used to ensure equitable access to educational opportunity?</p>	<p>States must identify per-pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funding, disaggregated by funding source. <i>§ 1111(h)(1)(C)(x)</i></p>	<p>Rhode Island’s current education funding management system provides the capability to identify per-pupil expenditure by funding source.</p>	<p>Currently Under Consideration: Conduct an analysis of per-pupil expenditure data to assess equitable distribution of resources within and across LEAs.</p>
<p>Should Rhode Island reserve the optional 3% of the State’s Title I</p>	<p>Each State educational agency may reserve not more than 3 percent of its</p>	<p>Elements of the direct student service explanations are similar to the former</p>	<p>Recommendation: Because of significant administrative</p>

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allocation for “direct student services”?	Title I allocation for each fiscal year to carry out direct student services . <i>§ 1003A(a)(1)(A)</i>	Supplemental Educational Services (SES) funding opportunity under No Child Left Behind. Rhode Island no longer offers SES under the ESEA Flexibility Waiver.	requirements and the limited number of students that would be eligible for the funds, RIDE will allow schools and LEAs more authority to choose how to use the funding for their students by including the 3% in regular Title I allocations.
How will the state use the Title IV Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants to support equitable student achievement?	Each state must develop a plan for the use of these funds to improve students’ academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, LEAs, schools, and local communities to: (1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions for student learning; and (3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. <i>§ 4107(a)</i> <i>§ 4108</i> <i>§ 4109(a)</i>	This funding is a new offering within ESSA.	Currently Under Consideration: A recommendation will be developed that maximizes the opportunity for flexibility and innovation in this part of ESSA to support strategic and innovative initiatives. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (12/14/16)

Closing Note:

Engagement and public input are critical elements of our state planning process. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, RIDE will be engaging with the greater education community with critical questions surrounding our state plan, as outlined above. Starting in July 2016, a group of 30 community members will gather monthly as a **Committee of Practitioners** to give the RIDE team input on high-level questions concerning ESSA, to serve as liaisons to the community at large regarding our planning process, and to weigh in on multiple drafts of the Rhode Island State ESSA Plan.

To cultivate widespread input and feedback, RIDE, with the Committee of Practitioners, will be hosting open **community forums** in November 2016, will launch a **public survey** in Winter 2017, and will hold a **second round of community meetings** in Spring 2017. Additionally, RIDE will be meeting frequently with **critical stakeholder groups** on pertinent topics to gain understanding and advice on how the state plan can support current practice. RIDE’s internal ESSA Oversight Team will incorporate all of this feedback, input, and guidance into several drafts of an ESSA state plan and submit to the U.S. Department of Education for the July 3, 2017 deadline.

To stay up to date on the latest ESSA state planning news, please visit RIDE’s ESSA website at www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA. For questions or comments, please email Felicia Brown at Felicia.Brown@ride.ri.gov.