Unified Approach to Statewide Education Report

Commissioned by R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-97-9

RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

Division of Teaching and Learning

June 2017

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Executive Summary

About the Report

In 2016, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed H8308, An Act Relating to Education – The Rhode Island Board of Education Act, introduced by Representative Gregg Amore. This act, codified as R.I. Gen Laws § 16-97-9, required a comprehensive study of a unified approach to statewide education.

The study report given to the General Assembly must contain:

- *Recommended policy objectives*
- *Implementation strategies*
- *A timetable for implementation of policies and formulation of rules and regulations necessary to carry out the recommendations*

This report must enumerate those recommendations in the following domains:

- *Curriculum frameworks for the core subjects*
- *School-based management models*
- *Professional development plans for educators*
- *Equal opportunity to succeed for all students*

The study also asks the Board of Education to examine the alignment between curriculum at the elementary and secondary level and the goals and objectives of the state's colleges and universities.

RIDE's Vision for Public Education in Rhode Island

Our vision is that Rhode Island schools prepare every graduate to pursue a fulfilling career, be a critical and creative thinker, a collaborative and self-motivated learner, and a culturally competent and active citizen.[1] In 2015, RIDE brought together more than 11,000 Rhode

[1] http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Board-of-Education/Strategic-Plan/2020VisionForEducation.pdf; http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Information-and-Accountability-User-Friendly-Data/ESSA/Engagement/SpringForumsPresentation.pdf.

Islanders to develop a strategic plan for education in the state. The strategic plan includes the following priorities:

- Teacher and Leader Support
- Early Childhood Education
- Personalized Learning Statewide
- Globally-Competent Graduates
- Informed Instructional Decision Making
- Student-Centered Resource Investment

Also in 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") into law, replacing No Child Left Behind ("NCLB"). ESSA is the seventh reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a 1965 civil rights law. This law requires RIDE to submit a state plan to the United States Department of Education that outlines how the state will support all learners in achieving a well-rounded education and holds districts and schools accountable for students' success. In addition to our state priorities, our decisions on the ESSA state plan are informed by the following guiding principles to ensure that the plan represents "Every Student. Every Voice:"

- Re-imagined schooling
- High expectations
- Empowerment
- Shared Responsibility

As part of the ESSA state plan, RIDE has set ambitious statewide goals to hold us collectively responsible for student success: 75% of 3rd graders proficient in reading; 75% of 8th graders proficient in STEM; 95% graduation rate; 100% of graduates earning postsecondary credentials; and other measures to narrow the opportunity gap in our state. As part of the accountability system, RIDE will be tracking students' postsecondary readiness through graduation rates and attainment of the Commissioner's Seal, Pathway Endorsements, and Career and Technical Education ("CTE") credentials.[2] RIDE will also be collecting data on postsecondary remediation rates and student persistence; these data will allow RIDE to examine elementary and secondary education's alignment to postsecondary goals and adjust course as necessary. The ESSA draft

[2] For more information on Pathway Endorsements, visit http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/AdditionalInformation/News/ViewArticle/tabid/408/ArticleId/357/New-regulations-offer-students-multiple-pathways-to-earn-a-diploma.aspx and http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Diploma-System/Secondary%20School%20Regulations%20Reference%20Guide-Final.pdf.

state plan and a companion document, interpreting and expanding on the state plan, are available on RIDE's website.

RIDE continues to work with Rhode Island's postsecondary institutions and the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner ("RIOPC") to align goals and objectives for a seamless pre-k through postsecondary education system. The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner ("RIOPC") in collaboration with its stakeholders, also recently developed a 5-year strategic plan to carry out its priorities for higher education:

- Higher attainment
- Opportunities to access and afford college
- Prosperous economy
- Effective institutions[3]

By 2020, the plan aims to increase postsecondary attainment to 60%, add more than 45,000 degree holders, and increase attainment among black and Latino Rhode Islanders by 50%. In September 2016, Governor Gina Raimondo set an even more ambitious goal: 70% of Rhode Islanders will attain a postsecondary credential by 2025. These state priorities for education and the federal requirements in ESSA and form the foundation for our recommendations in this report.

Method

The Rhode Island Department of Education ("RIDE") convened an internal team with plans for extensive outreach to the field to respond to the statute's requirements. These team members conducted stakeholder outreach, consulted with other professionals in the organization, researched best practices, and compared other state approaches to devise recommendations that to benefit educators and students in our state.

RIDE's report team met with Representative Gregg Amore (the legislation's sponsor), John Simmons of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council ("RIPEC"), and superintendents and curriculum directors from across the state to ensure that our process yielded a report that both responded to the law and provided helpful guidance for improving public education in Rhode Island going forward.

[3] https://www.riopc.edu/page/Strategic%20plan/.

Stakeholder Engagement

RIDE released a survey to all public educators in Rhode Island in December 2016 to gather input and assess needs in curriculum, professional learning, and school leadership.[4] More than 2,300 educators provided feedback to inform the study. The report team also distributed a brief survey to curriculum directors and other district-level personnel that included questions about the alignment of districts' current curricula to the state standards.

Additionally, this year, Rhode Island surveyed its students, teachers, and families using a program called SurveyWorks. The survey asked school community members their opinions and perceptions regarding a broad range of school culture and climate issues. The goal is to provide meaningful data that can help schools improve.[5] In addition to other domains, the survey asks questions about school resources, professional development, school leadership, and school climate. More than 8,500 educators answered the questions in SurveyWorks, giving us a larger sample of educators and confirming results from our earlier surveys.

Deputy Commissioner Mary Ann Snider and Chief of Teaching and Learning Carol Blanchette spoke with superintendents, curriculum directors, and other district stakeholders individually to gather feedback about their needs. The report team also met with Representative Amore, superintendents, curriculum directors, interest group representatives, along with other stakeholders periodically throughout the study to update progress and solicit feedback.

What We Learned

Curriculum

Educators across the state do not have a shared definition of "curriculum." RIDE, along with the report team, agreed that a definition of consistent curriculum needs to be developed and shared across the state. Further, a significant number of Rhode Island educators believe the materials they use in their classrooms could be improved and consequently, spend a great deal of time searching for materials to use in their classrooms. Many teachers report spending time weekly searching for resources to supplement, augment, or enhance those materials.

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[4] See the survey questions and responses at https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-SK93BGFH/.
[5] To see more about SurveyWorks and view the responses, visit http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/RIEducationData/SurveyWorks.aspx#35821332-response-rates-updated-weekly.

Professional Learning

Professional learning is one piece of a larger talent management system that includes recruiting, hiring, training, supporting, and retaining excellent educators. District leadership reported difficulties hiring teachers in critical shortage areas, in part because of hiring timelines. In many districts, positions must be posted internally for transfer candidates before they can be posted externally, even if there are no qualified in-district candidates. The hiring timelines are misaligned with preparation program graduations and, consequently, many candidates may choose to leave Rhode Island to secure positions, leaving districts with smaller applicant pools.

Educators believe professional development is essential, but many comment that their professional learning has not been meaningful. Some districts have been able to implement common planning time and teacher coaching – two research-based strategies to support teachers – but it is difficult for districts personnel to know what other districts are doing and share best practices.

Shared Leadership

Rhode Island educators believe that shared leadership leads to improved academic achievement, increased job satisfaction, and stronger school culture and climate. Many of those educators would be interested in taking on teacher-leadership positions, but are not interested in traditional administrative positions. An advancement pathway for teachers who would like more responsibility and voice in the school building is a powerful retention strategy and one that needs to be addressed. Districts are also interested in leadership development – RIDE recently distributed $350,000 in mini-grants for leadership development work and received more than $1.5 million in proposals for those grants. RIDE sees a need to continue to support shared leadership initiatives.

High-level Recommendations

To accomplish the goals outlined in R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-97-9, RIDE will work with districts to create a culture of continuous improvement in Rhode Island education. To foster the cycle of continuous improvement, RIDE will support districts and schools in Rhode Island to do the following:

Strategy 1: Develop a consistent curriculum in English language arts and math.

Strategy 2: Enable districts to create or identify high-quality materials and plan for implementation.

Strategy 3: Commit to ongoing and relevant professional learning so that teachers have the content and instructional practices necessary to implement the curriculum.

Strategy 4: Use protocols to continuously improve practices and curriculum based on reviews of student work, assessment data, and classroom observations.

Strategy 5: Support current leaders and identify teacher leadership roles for shared leadership.

The following report explains in more depth what current research says, what the report team heard from educators, and the recommended strategies to address identified areas for improvement.

The Rhode Island Department of Education would like to thank all the stakeholders who collaborated with RIDE to make this report possible. We especially would like to acknowledge the leadership of Representative Gregg Amore. Representative Amore's current role as the athletic director at East Providence High School and his experiences as a former teacher provided valuable insight in the preparation of this report.

Curriculum

Rhode Island's ESSA state plan sets ambitious expectations for student achievement and student-centered learning experiences as elements of a well-rounded education;[6] RIDE's strategic plan also emphasizes making personalized learning available for all students to help them become globally competent graduates.[7] While Rhode Island has rigorous state learning standards for what students should know and be able to do, those standards will only have an impact on student success if curricula are aligned to those standards, and if aligned curricula are implemented with fidelity – with the resources and training to ensure that teachers can implement their curricula as designed.

What Current Research Says

A recent research review from Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy and Johns Hopkins Center for Research and Reform in Education revealed that:

- *Curriculum is a critical factor in student academic success.*
- *Comprehensive, content-rich curriculum is a common feature of academically high-performing countries.*
- *Cumulative impact of high-quality curriculum can be significant, particularly in the upper grades.*
- *Most instructional materials are selected by individual teachers; consequently, most students are taught with curricula not defined by districts or states.*
- *Research comparing curricula are rare, so they are difficult to act upon.*[8]

Complicating these issues, the term "curriculum" may mean many different things: materials, scope and sequencing of standards, or a purchased program.[9]

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[6] http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Information-and-Accountability-User-Friendly-Data/ESSA/StatePlan/RI-ESSA-State-Plan-For-Public-Comment.pdf.
[7] http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Board-of-Education/Strategic-Plan/2020VisionForEducation.pdf.
[8] David Steiner, *Curriculum Research: What We Know and Where We Need to Go*, StandardsWork, (2017).
[9] *Id*.

What We Heard from Educators

Curriculum recommendations should create a more consistent curriculum by having common agreement on sequencing of standards, while still leaving room for districts, schools, and educators to implement curricular materials for their individual students' needs; the goal is to develop model "curriculum frameworks," that provide consistency, guidance, and flexibility.

There are, however, many intermediate steps to achieve a consistent curriculum, and the nationwide research above is reflected in Rhode Island. Currently, educators do not have a shared understand of the term "curriculum:" some refer to textbooks as curriculum and others refer to their programs or instructional strategies. The first task in having more consistent curriculum statewide will be developing a statewide definition of curriculum.

The next inquiry is whether existing curricula aligns to the state standards. Districts reported to RIDE that there is currently more coordination in mathematics than in English language arts ("ELA"). While math has built-in prerequisite skills, coordinating ELA poses additional issues because it is "text dependent," meaning that unless districts use the same sources of literary and informational texts, it is difficult to have a shared curriculum among them.

Similarly, according to SurveyWorks responses, most teachers felt that the quality of resources at their schools needs to improve.[10] Teachers in the urban core are most likely to believe that their materials are inadequate (*See* Appendix B, *Compare Figures 1 and 2)*, but the majority of educators report that they spend some time weekly searching for curricular materials to use in their classrooms (*See* Appendix B, *Figure 3)*. Classroom teachers indicated that they search for materials to supplement, to modify, or to replace existing curriculum materials. Providing trusted curricula reviews or criteria for evaluating curricular materials might ease the burden on classroom teachers.

Recommended Strategies: Curriculum

RIDE wants to ensure that every district and school has access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum, aligned to state standards, that is consistent across districts. We believe the following actions will promote consistency while still allowing for sufficient local flexibility.

[10] https://secure.panoramaed.com/ride/understand/1314726/survey_results/1544549#/questions/topics/12174.

Strategy 1. Develop a consistent curriculum in English language arts and math.

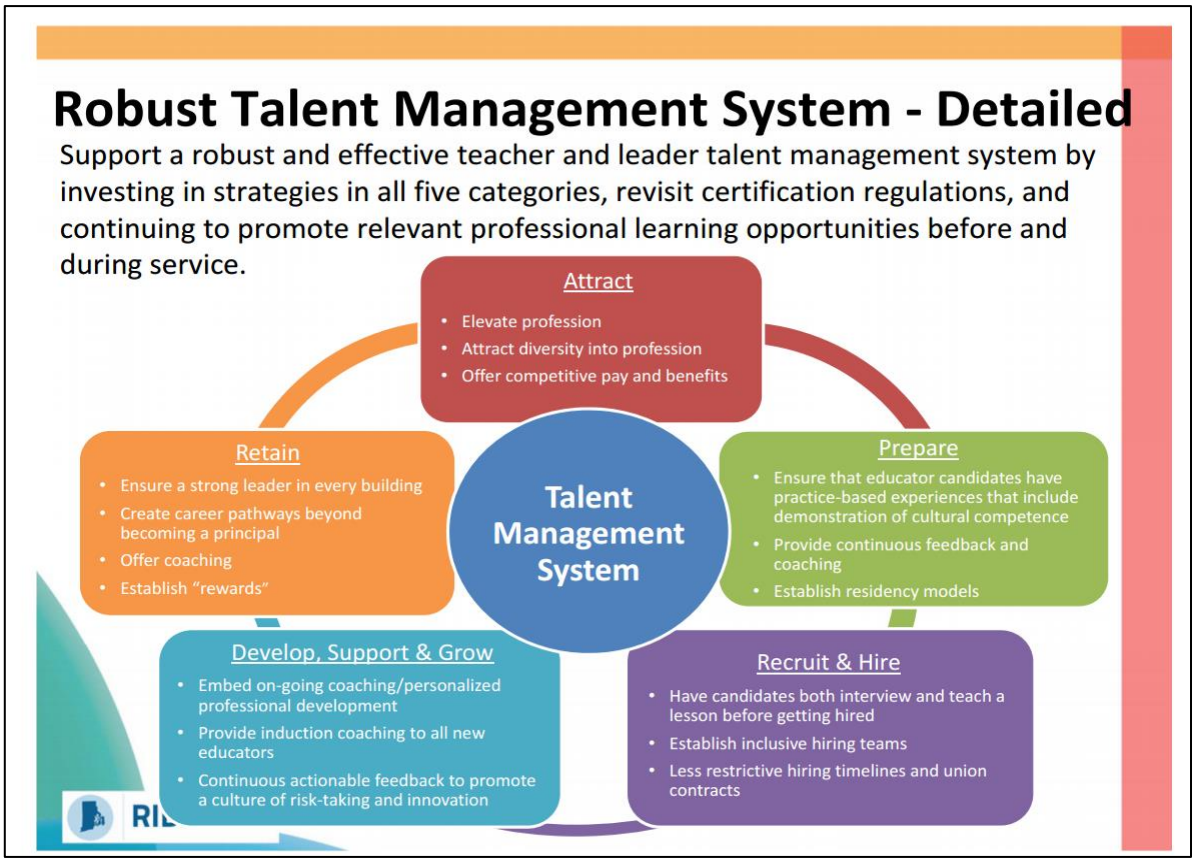
Action	Timeline
Define curriculum and its features.	Year 1
Identify parameters required to establish consistent curriculum while maintaining local flexibility.	Year 1
Socialize curriculum definitions with districts and educator preparation programs.	Year 1
Develop curriculum toolkits, prepare educator cadre, and pilot the toolkits.	Year 1
Offer mini-grants to districts to review curriculum against criteria.	Years 2 – 3

Strategy 2. Enable districts to create or identify high-quality materials and plan for implementation.

Action	Timeline
Develop rubric for material review, process to "plan for success" and share purpose and process with the field.	Year 1
Create Teaching and Learning website page to host materials reviews and post trusted reviews.	Year 1
Implement process to review materials that are widely used in districts or for districts to use independently.	Year 2+
Develop districts tool kit to identify implementation considerations necessary to use high quality materials with fidelity.	Years 2 – 3

Professional Learning

High-quality professional learning does not exist in isolation. As stated in Rhode Island's ESSA state plan,[11] it is part of a talent management system that includes: attracting top talent, adequately preparing educators, enabling districts to recruit and hire the best candidates, supporting educators to develop and grow, and retaining strong educators *(See Figure below)*.[12] The RIDE strategic plan also calls for improved educator and leader preparation, high-quality and relevant professional development, effective practices in personnel management, and focused training for educators working in urban schools.[13] These are both visions of a robust talent management system that will help support and grow our current and future educators and increase access to excellent teachers for all students.



ESSA Spring Forum

What Current Research Says

The two most important factors in student learning are effective teachers and effective school leaders.[14] The process to provide all students equal access to effective educators begins with the recruitment and hiring process. Having access to a deep talent pool enables districts to hire candidates with strong potential to be effective teachers.

According to one talent management study, [15] if an organization has just one dollar to spend on either improving staff development or improving selection and hiring, the organization should invest in selection and hiring because:

- *The "fit" between employee and employer helps prevent turnover;*
- *Traits like maturity and flexibility take time to develop; it is more efficient to hire candidates who already have those traits.[16]*

Early recruitment[17] and streamlined application and hiring processes also assist districts and schools in developing a larger hiring pool and encouraging strong teachers to accept offers; in one study, researchers demonstrated that strong candidates accepted offers in adjoining districts merely because of tedious hiring processes in their own districts.[18]

Additionally, research confirms what educators have said about many professional development programs: they are disconnected from teachers' practice and school goals, not designed for adult learners, and very rarely provide ongoing support.[19]

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[11] http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Information-and-Accountability-User-Friendly-Data/ESSA/StatePlan/RI-ESSA-State-Plan-For-Public-Comment.pdf.
[12] *Id*.
[13] http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Board-of-Education/Strategic-Plan/2020VisionForEducation.pdf.
[14] Robert J. Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, 2-4 (ASCD 2007); https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/efp%20final%20submission%20full.pdf;
[15] http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543675.pdf.
[16] *Id*.
[17] https://tntp.org/assets/documents/MissedOpportunities.pdf.
[18] http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543675.pdf.
[19] Sarah Archibald, Ph.D., et al. *High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources*, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520732.pdf (2011); Jenny DeMonte, *High-Quality Professional Development for Teachers: Supporting Teacher Training to*

High-quality professional leaning, on the other hand:

1. *Aligns with school/district/state goals, and standards and assessments;*
2. *Focuses on core content and modeling strategies for that content;*
3. *Employs active learning and provides opportunities for teachers to practice new skills;*
4. *Provides opportunities for collaboration;*
5. *Includes embedded follow-up and ongoing feedback.*[20]

Many of these criteria require investing in resources— such as instructional coaching — or investing time — such as collaboration periods — but traditional school schedules do not lend themselves to these professional learning practices.

What We Heard from Educators

Rhode Island is committed to increasing the diversity of its teaching force and attracting and retaining top talent in the field,[21] but districts have difficulty hiring qualified candidates in critical shortage areas like teachers for English language learners and special education. Some postsecondary officials have said that their graduates would prefer to stay in Rhode Island, but because of the delay between graduation and public schools' hiring schedules, many of those candidates accept jobs out of state. Additionally, many collective bargaining contracts require that all positions be posted internally for transfer candidates for a period before the positions can be posted publicly. In cases where these positions are critical shortage areas, the district may not have any transfer applicants and miss the opportunity to hire from the largest pool of applicants.

For Rhode Island's current educators, many agree that much of the available professional learning is not effective nor high quality.[22] According to survey data, most would prefer

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Improve Student Learning, Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/DeMonteLearning4Teachers-1.pdf (2013).

[20] Sarah Archibald, Ph.D., et al. *High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources*, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520732.pdf Feb. 2011; Jenny DeMonte, *High-Quality Professional Development for Teachers: Supporting Teacher Training to Improve Student Learning*, Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/DeMonteLearning4Teachers-1.pdf (2013).

[21] http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Board-of-Education/Strategic-Plan/2020VisionForEducation.pdf.

[22] https://secure.panoramaed.com/ride/understand/1314726/survey_results/1544549#/questions/topics/12173.

professional learning that is: 1. aligned to their grade level/content area or curriculum, and 2. differentiated based on skill level and experience. (*See* Appendix B, *Figure 3).*

While embedded follow-up and ongoing feedback are research-based components of high-quality professional learning, district leaders have expressed concerns that the time and funds available for professional learning do not allow for ongoing support. While some districts have implemented robust teacher coaching programs or designed schedules to allow for common planning time, districts are not aware of their neighboring districts' practices and do not have the structures or opportunity to share them. This is true at the district and school level as well; educators would like to learn successful practices other educators use, but they lack the opportunity to share.

Recommended Strategies: Professional Learning

Strategy 3. Commit to ongoing and relevant professional learning so that teachers have the content and instructional practices necessary to implement the curriculum.

Action	Timeline
Develop RI definitions and standards for professional learning systems.	Year 1
Assist districts in developing leader roles and professional learning systems.	Year 1+
Develop toolkits to provide models of high quality professional learning systems.	Year 1+
Develop instruction observation models, provide observation and feedback training.	Year 1+
Create structures so that districts can more easily partner on high-quality professional learning.	Year 1+
Create a system to prepare and support instructional coaches.	Year 1+
Require districts and higher education/educator preparation program partnerships for relevant RIDE mini-grant opportunities.	Year 1+
Establish professional learning as the basis for certification progression and renewal.	Year 2
Establish beginning teacher and principal model-program standards.	Year 2+
Review evaluation system guidance to align professional goals with related expectations.	Year 2+

Strategy 4: Use protocols to continuously improve educator practices and curriculum based on reviews of student work, assessment data, and classroom observations.

Action	Timeline
Align school and district improvement planning to the consolidated resource plan (federal grant application system) and accountability metrics.	Year 1
Develop culture, practices, and protocols that support continuous improvement.	Year 1+
Identify schools and districts that have demonstrated strong practices in place to highlight and share.	Year 2+
Intentionally support the use of continuous improvement of practices and protocols in schools identified for improvement.	Year 2+
Institute a statewide notification deadline for resigning and retiring teachers.	Year 1
Encourage districts to collaborate with key stakeholders, including unions, to ensure their ability to hire qualified applicants in hard-to-fill positions.	Year 1+

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is a component of a robust talent management system and a retention tool for great teachers. In 2016, RIDE initiated leadership work by:

1. Reviewing national leadership standards;
2. Instituting leadership mini-grant for districts;
3. Forming a leadership advisory committee.

Additionally, RIDE has recently partnered with the Partnership for Rhode Island to give several principals the opportunity to participate executive leadership training.

While these efforts support administrator support and growth, leadership is not limited to traditional administrative roles. Rhode Island districts have demonstrated interest in engaging in creative leadership work. When RIDE solicited proposals for leadership mini-grants in 2016, we received more than $1 million in requests for $350,000 available mini-grants. RIDE will continue to support this teacher leadership work.

What Current Research Says

Strong school leadership is second only to classroom instruction in impacting what students learn at school.[23] Principal roles, however, have become more complex in recent years, as they are expected to be instructional leaders and managers, but principals may not receive needed training and support to carry out these functions. Strong principal preparation programs invariably start by developing rigorous standards and developing curriculum based on those standards.[24]

School leaders are not just principals and assistant principals. Many teachers are interested in holding leadership roles in their schools but do not want to leave the classroom or become formal administrators.[25] Teacher career pathways, offering teachers opportunities for promotion, recognition, and leadership within their classroom roles or in hybrid teacher-leader roles, are attractive to many teachers and can be a retention strategy in a strong talent management system.[26]

What We Heard from Educators

From our survey data we conclude that educators in Rhode Island believe school-based shared leadership models will improve academic outcomes in their schools *(See* Appendix B, *Figure 4).*[27] They identified developing a shared mission/vision and developing teacher leaders as the most important elements of shared leadership *(See* Appendix B, *Figure 5).*

Independent of shared leadership at schools, Rhode Island teachers value strong leadership and career pathways for teachers who do not want to become administrators. The precise nature of these career pathways varies as teachers want to assume leadership positions both in and out of the classroom. These might include instructional coaches, lead teachers, department chairs,

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[23] Kenneth Leithwood, et al., *How Leadership Influences Student Learning Executive Summary*, Learning from Leadership Project, http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning-Executive-Summary.pdf (2004).
[24] Brenda J. Turnbull, et al., *The Principal Pipeline Initiative in Action*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Building-a-Stronger-Principalship-Vol-5-The-Principal-Pipeline-Initiative-in-Action.pdf (2016).
[25] *Metlife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership*, https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/MetLife-Teacher-Survey-2012.pdf (2013).
[26] Catharine Fisk Natale, Ph.D., et al., *Creating Sustainable Teacher Career Pathways: A 21st Century Imperative* https://www.nnstoy.org/download/career_pathways/Final%20updated%20Research%20Report.pdf (2013).
[27] https://secure.panoramaed.com/ride/understand/1314726/survey_results/1544549#/questions/topics/12175.

multi-classroom leaders, professional learning facilitators, or data coaches. Many educators also report that they would prefer professional learning from teacher leaders as they have credibility from their classroom experience. To take on these roles, they must be clearly defined, and teachers in those roles need targeted training and support.

Principals also report a need for more targeted support to fill their roles, and preparation programs must keep pace with those needs. Rhode Island in particular has difficulty recruiting and retaining high quality principals. Thus, there is significant interest in and need for leadership development and growth.

Recommended Strategies: Shared Leadership

Strategy 5: Support current leaders and identify teacher leadership roles.

Action	Timeline
Create leadership competencies for all levels of leadership: central office, principals, and teachers.	Year 1
Provide high-quality leadership training.	Year 1
Offer toolkits and models of shared leadership to districts and schools.	Year 2+
Help identify policies and practices that support shared leadership models.	Year 2+
Improve access to teacher leadership roles.	Year 2+

Resources

The recommendations and strategies above are not a menu of options; they represent a set of interdependent strategies and actions that work together to impact student achievement. For example, if the teacher does not have the resources or training to implement an aligned curriculum, it will not be implemented with fidelity and have the desired impact. Similarly, if one district has sufficient resources to implement a curriculum as written and another district does not, the aligned curriculum does not create consistency. Resources in this section are necessary to carry out the coordinated strategies that this report recommends.

Year 1 – Planning Year

Expenditure	Role	Estimated Cost
Fellow, Educator Excellence & Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	Manage project, pre-plan, coordinate RFP process, coordinate with the partner organization, serve as intermediary between partner and RIDE.	$120,000
Partnership with Outside Organization	Conduct initial outreach, complete needs assessment, create work plan and measures of success, write toolkits.	$150,000
Total Project Cost, Year 1		**$270,000**

NOTE: In addition to the expenditures above, the Educator Excellence team receives one FTE to fill a vacant position and one FTE as a structural increase. Other departments may need to adjust existing work flow to accommodate tasks for this project. These expenditures should not be calculated as part of the project cost.

Year 2 – Development Year

Expenditure	Role	Estimated Cost
Fellow, Educator Excellence & Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	Manage project, coordinate with the partner organization, serve as intermediary between partner and RIDE, serve as project contact for districts.	$120,000
Partnership with Outside Organization	Ongoing contract with partner organization to pilot program in selected districts, evaluate program success and refine toolkits as needed.	$150,000*
Mini-Grants to Pilot Districts	Defray costs associated with pilot implementation – teacher time, substitute teachers, additional materials, as necessary.	$250,000*
Total Project Cost, Year 2		**$520,000**

***** The exact distribution of funds between the partner organization and the mini-grants is to be determined.

Year 3 – Implementation and Evaluation Year

Expenditure	Role	Estimated Cost
Fellow, Educator Excellence & Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	Manage project, coordinate with the partner organization, serve as intermediary between partner and RIDE, serve as project contact for districts, assist in evaluation process.	$120,000
Partnership with Outside Organization	Ongoing contract with partner organization to evaluate the pilot districts against measures of success, roll out toolkit with next group of districts.	$300,000*
Mini-Grants to Districts	Defray costs associated with – teacher time, substitute teachers, additional materials, as necessary.	$150,000*
Total Project Cost, Year 3		**$520,000**
Total 3-year Project Cost		**$1.31 million**

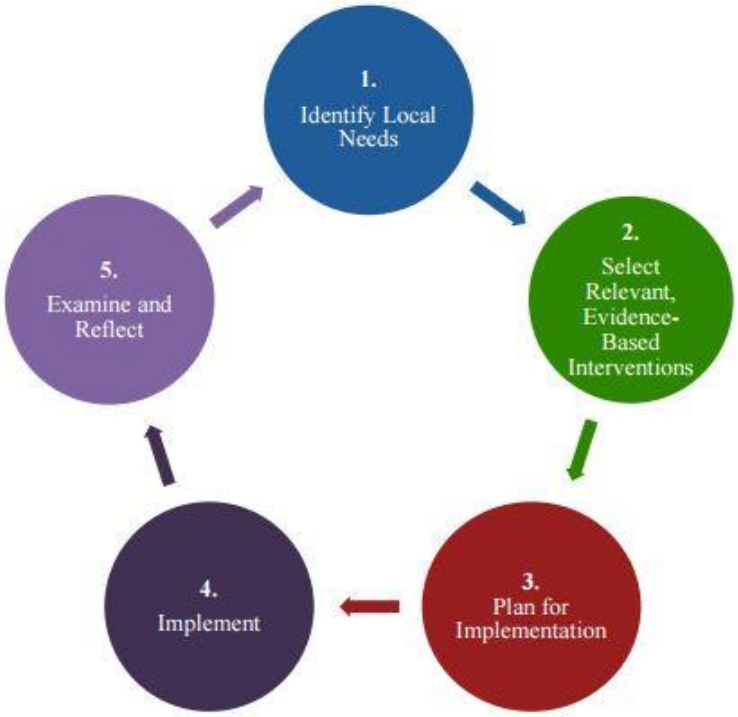
***** The exact distribution of funds between the partner organization and the mini-grants is to be determined.

Year 4 and forward – Expansion or Course Adjustment

If the project evaluation determines that it has met its goals for the pilot districts, RIDE will create a plan and a budget request to expand to the remaining districts over the next several years.

Conclusion

Rhode Island's education system must work on behalf of every student and move from compliant accountability to a coherent system of shared responsibility. In a shared responsibility system, all Rhode Islanders recognize their responsibilities for public education in the state: a larger ecosystem of districts, schools, elected officials, community members, organizations, institutions of higher education, and businesses dedicated to our students. The entire community supports students to achieve their goals, and every stakeholder is part of a cycle of continuous improvement (*See Figure below)*.[28]



Cycle of Continuous Improvement

This cycle of continuous improvement is not a one-time event but a mindset and approach. One 2017 report examined leveraging a continuous improvement mindset to improve student outcomes.[29] The report encouraged states to establish routines for continuous improvement

[28] *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*, U. S. Dept. of Education, https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseinvestment.pdf (2016) at 3.
[29] *Leverage Points: Thirteen Opportunities for State Education Agencies to Build and Use Evidence to Improve Student Outcomes*, Results For America – CCSSO, http://results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/R4A_LP_REV_May-2017.pdf (2017) at 16.

and adopt best practices to make a continuous improvement cycle an embedded part of how the state education agency and districts operate. These best practices included identifying challenges and solutions, collecting data, creating feedback loops, collecting implementation information, analyzing data, and reflecting on outcomes. This reports incorporates many of those best practices, so recommendations for a unified approach to education in this state are not a static set of recommendations but a process to continue improving and refining over time.

Appendices

Appendix A: Timeline

Action	Timeline
Define curriculum and its features.	Year 1
Identify the parameters to establish consistent curriculum while maintaining local flexibility.	Year 1
Socialize curriculum definitions with districts and educator preparation programs.	Year 1
Develop curriculum toolkits, prepare educator cadre, and pilot.	Year 1
Develop RI definitions and standards for professional learning systems.	Year 1
Establish professional learning as the basis for certification progression and renewal.	Year 1
Align school and district improvement planning to the consolidated resource plan and accountability metrics.	Year 1
Create leadership competencies for all levels of leadership: central office, principals and teachers.	Year 1
Provide high quality leadership training.	Year 1
Assist districts in developing leader roles and professional learning systems.	Year 1+
Develop toolkits to provide models of high quality professional learning systems.	Year 1+
Develop instruction observation models, provide observation and feedback training.	Year 1+

Create structures so that districts can more easily partner on high quality professional learning.	Year 1+
Create a system to prepare and support instructional coaches.	Year 1+
Require district and higher education/educator preparation program partnerships for relevant RIDE mini-grant opportunities.	Year 1+
Establish beginning teacher and principal model-program standards.	Year 2+
Review evaluation system guidance to align professional goals with related expectations.	Year 2+
Develop culture, practices, and protocols that support continuous improvement.	Year 2+
Identify places that have demonstrated strong practices in place to highlight and share.	Year 2+
Intentionally support the use of continuous improvement of practices and protocols in schools identified for improvement.	Year 2+
Offer toolkits and models of shared leadership to districts and schools.	Year 2+
Help identify policies and practices that support shared leadership models.	Year 2+
Increase access to teacher leadership opportunities.	Year 2+
Offer mini grants to districts to review curriculum.	Year 3+

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1: RIDE Educator Survey

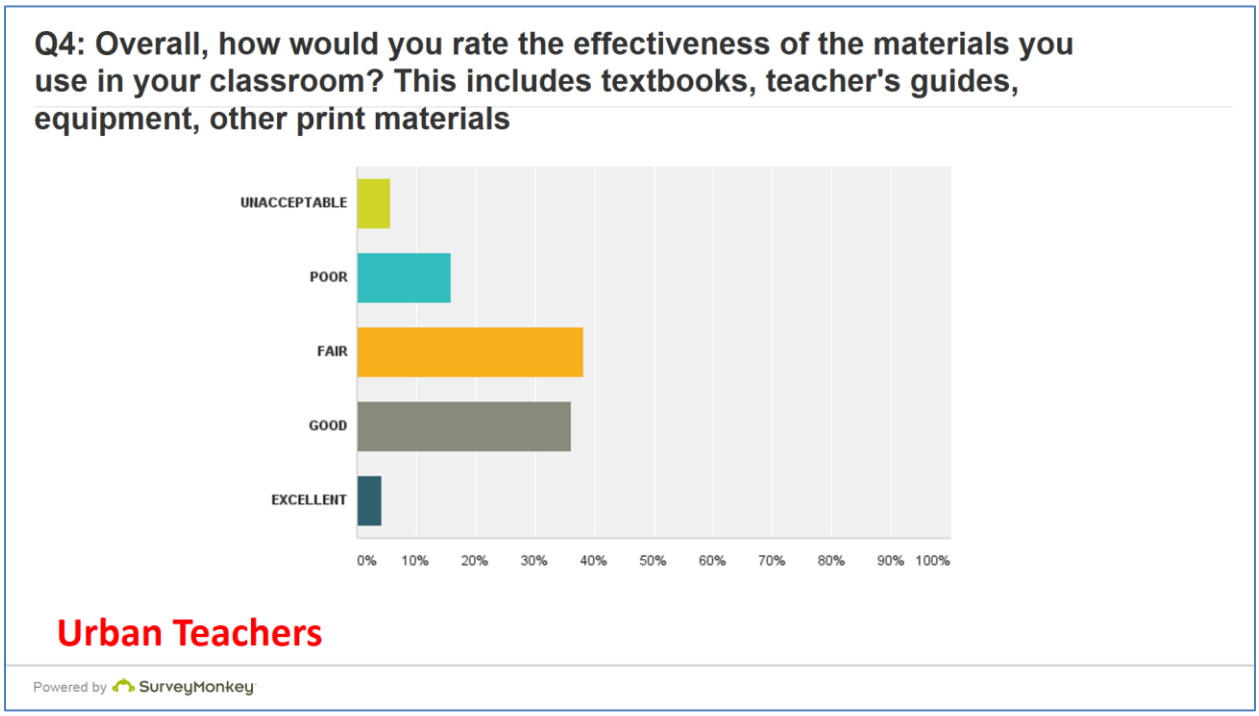


Figure 2: RIDE Educator Survey

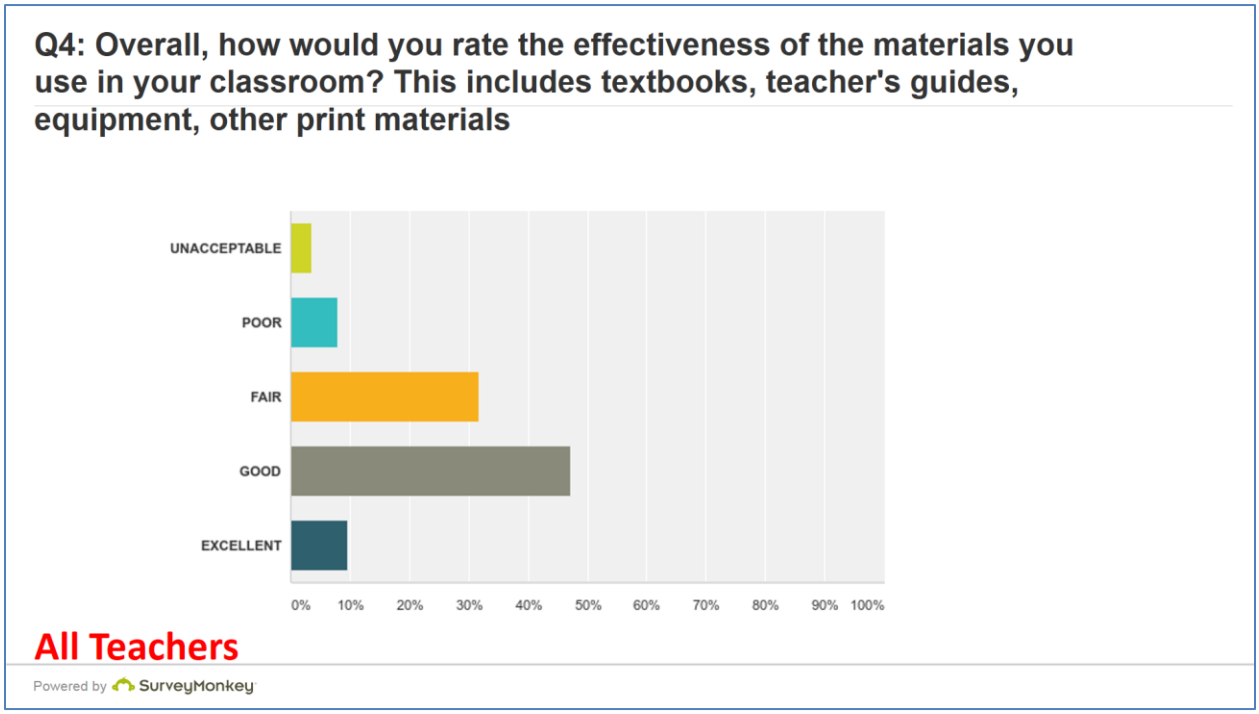


Figure 3: RIDE Educator Survey

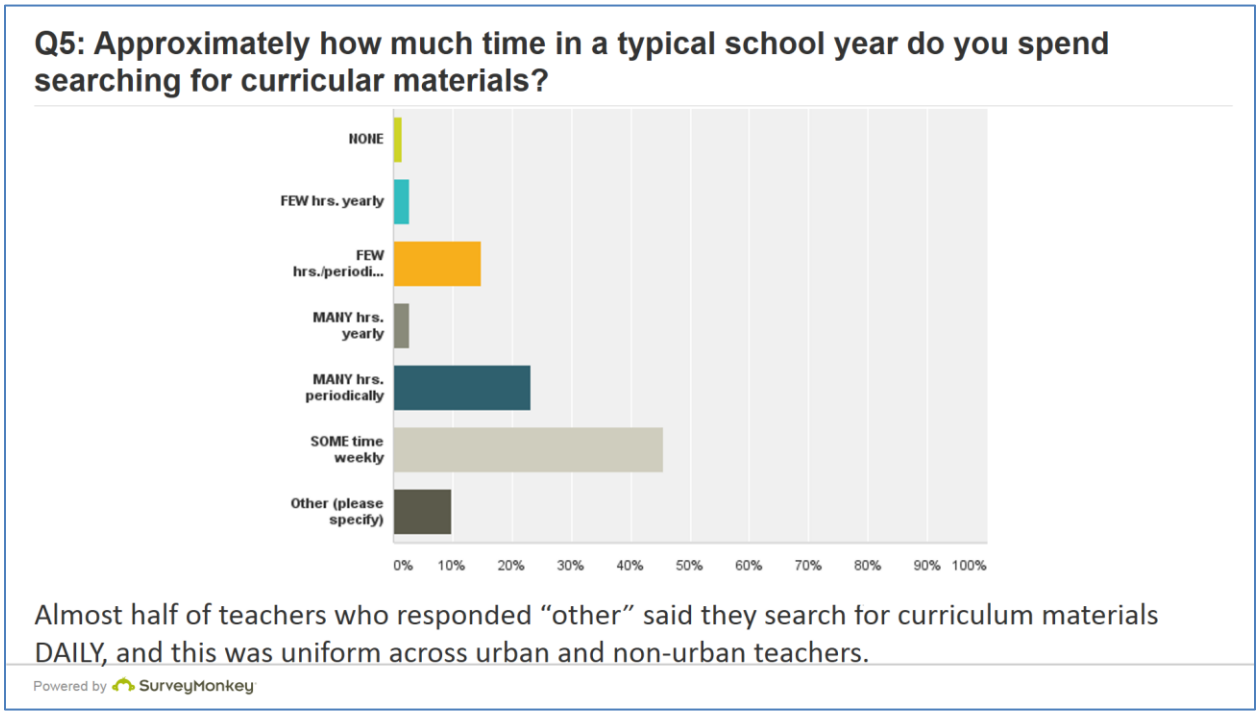


Figure 4: RIDE Educator Survey

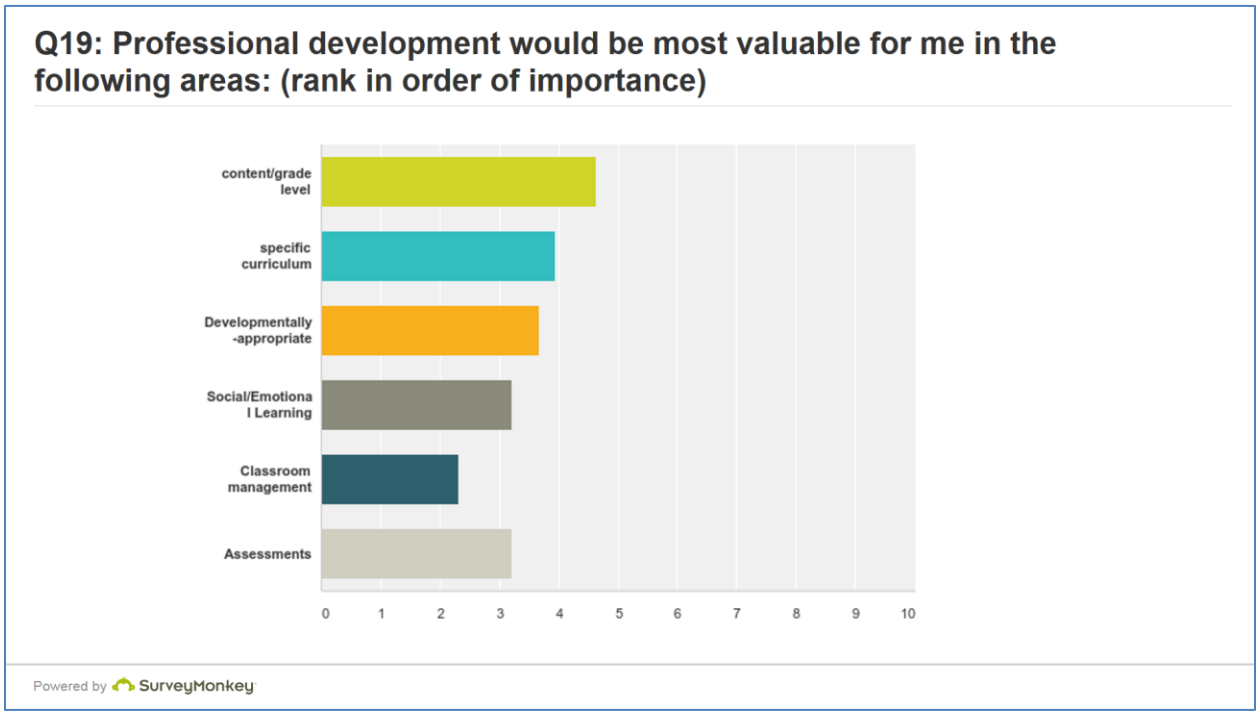


Figure 5: RIDE Educator Survey

Q26: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: "School-based shared leadership models will improve academic outcomes in your school."

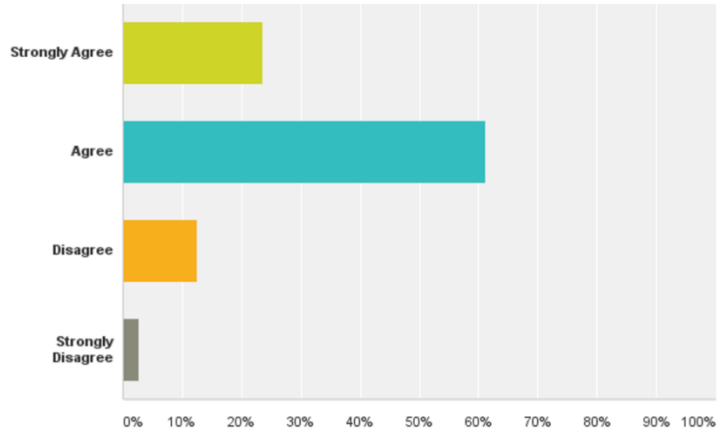


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Figure 6: RIDE Educator Survey

Q27: Which of the following do you think is most important to support shared leadership practices at the school or district level?Rank in order of importance.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Instructional coaching	11.57% 163	14.62% 206	18.31% 258	22.14% 312	19.59% 276	13.77% 194	1,409	3.35
Executive leadership skills	8.66% 122	12.42% 175	13.91% 196	17.39% 245	22.78% 321	24.84% 350	1,409	2.92
Developing a shared vision or mission	42.30% 596	17.32% 244	13.98% 197	11.07% 156	9.44% 133	5.89% 83	1,409	4.54
Developing teacher leaders	17.32% 244	27.40% 386	24.06% 339	15.33% 216	10.50% 148	5.39% 76	1,409	4.10
Leading adult learners	4.12% 58	6.88% 97	10.72% 151	16.68% 235	25.62% 361	35.98% 507	1,409	2.39
Training for school leaders to carry out shared leadership	16.04% 226	21.36% 301	19.02% 268	17.39% 245	12.07% 170	14.12% 199	1,409	3.70

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Appendix C: RIDE Report Team Members

Mary Ann Snider, *Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning*

Carol Blanchette, *Chief of Teaching and Learning*

Lisa Foehr, *Director of Educator Excellence and Certification Services*

Phyllis Lynch, *Director of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum*

Andy Andrade, *Special Assistant for Policy and Legislative Relations*

Melissa Cabral Braga, *Administrative Officer*

Lauren E. Hill, *Leadership for Educational Equity Public Policy Fellow*