

# Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders

Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services

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# Table of Contents

<b>Rhode Island’s 2020 Vision for Education.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standards .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Standard 1 .....	7
Standard 2 .....	8
Standard 3 .....	9
Standard 4 .....	10
Standard 5 .....	11
Standard 6 .....	12
Standard 7 .....	13
Standard 8 .....	14
Standard 9 .....	15
Standard 10.....	16
<b>Standards at A Glance .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>18</b>

# RHODE ISLAND'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

**OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS IN 2020. Priority 1: Teacher and Leader Support-** Rhode Island aspires to support and grow our current educators and leaders through relevant, personalized, and job-embedded professional learning that focuses on students in classrooms in ways that build collegiality and collaborative decision-making. We will support great teaching by strengthening the recruitment and retention of high quality educators and leaders.

## Introduction

### Leadership Matters

*“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”*

Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004)

The Introduction for the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) begins with the following question: “It’s the end of another Thursday, and in schools around the country, educational leaders are shutting down their computers and heading home after another full-throttle day. As they leave the building, they replay the events of the day and ask themselves: Did I help make a difference today for our students? Did I focus on what matters most for their learning and well-being?” The PSEL were developed to provide “guideposts” so answers to those questions can be “Yes”. The Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders (RISEL) is a close adaptation of the PSEL. As the PSEL note, they are grounded in research and real-life experiences. They outline foundational principles for leadership and are student-centric. They will help ensure educational leaders are ready to meet the challenges and opportunities in schools and districts today. The new PSEL highlight the areas of leadership that have shown to have an impact such as managing change in schools, and creating a culture grounded in continual improvement while ensuring educational equity for all students.

The impact strong school leadership can have in schools, particularly high-poverty schools, is paramount after teacher effectiveness. It is to that end that *The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* provides support for states and districts to recruit, prepare, and develop highly capable leaders. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will focus on strengthening leadership in Rhode Island schools in a variety of ways:

- Creating new standards for educational leaders and identifying the competencies demonstrated by high performing principals and superintendents to inform leadership preparation, leadership development, and leadership evaluation.
- Developing the knowledge and effectiveness of principals and district leadership through the yearlong *National Institute of School Leadership Executive*

*Development Program.* First year participants (2017-2018) will become program facilitators who will train leaders in future cohorts, with the goal of engaging all Rhode Island principals in the program.

- Developing the knowledge and effectiveness of superintendents through participation in executive leadership programs offered by local business partners associated with *The Partnership for Rhode Island*, a non-profit organization focused on improving Rhode Island's economy.
- Defining teacher leadership and providing guidance to support schools in fostering shared leadership structures and developing teacher leader roles and pathways.

### **To Whom Do The Standards Apply?**

The introduction in the (2008) Standards for Educational Leadership in Rhode Island begins with ***school leadership matters***. It still matters! It matters at all levels- teacher, school and district. Because the RISEL are an adaptation of the PSEL, the RI Standards for Educational Leaders 2018 are also designed as the foundation for leadership at all levels, however the descriptors that follow each standard emphasize school and district leaders. Within schools and districts leadership roles will vary. Individuals will have additional or different responsibilities depending on the district and school structure and policies. RIDE will continue development work to further articulate competencies specific to school principals, district-based roles and teacher leadership roles. Each standard is followed by several descriptors that provide more detail to help build the understanding of the standard. Similar to the PSEL, the RISEL standards and their descriptors are not checklists of tasks or discrete skills to be used in isolation, but rather tools that communicate values, knowledge and skills to be an effective district level or school level leader.

### **Why are revised Rhode Island leadership standards needed now?**

The state of affairs of the 2018 schoolhouse is dramatically different from that of 2008. The complex needs in schools have changed, fueled by dynamic demographics, transformation efforts, evolving instructional strategies, and the impact of technology on teaching and learning. Additionally, the impact of a global economy and the transforming workplace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century profoundly affect how schools prepare students for college and career. All of this change brings with it increasing demands and challenges as well as new opportunities for leaders. Recognizing this, in 2015 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders ([PSEL](#)). The Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders follow suit and articulate the knowledge and skills educational leaders in Rhode Island need to guide their practice.

Rhode Island teachers, principals, and superintendents collaborated with RIDE to develop a set of standards that will influence leadership preparation, hiring, development and retention practices, and inform the work of leaders across a talent management continuum at both the school and district levels.



### Who worked on the refreshed standards?

A Standards Workgroup was established by the RIDE Leadership Advisory Committee (Appendix A). The charge of the workgroup was to review the existing standards and make a proposal for updated or refreshed standards if necessary. The subcommittee convened in December 2016 and completed their work in April 2017. RIDE shared the work of the subcommittee with the full Leadership Advisory Committee, stakeholders and sought public comment during the fall of 2017. These standards reflect the input of many educators and many hours of deep thinking and care in consideration of the importance of leadership.

The refreshed Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders (2018) are a by-product of the work facilitated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in the creation of the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). The Rhode Island workgroup utilized the PSEL as an anchor document in developing the Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders.

The PSEL represent a refreshed set of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, designed to guide preparation, professional development, and model best practice for leaders. The CCSSO worked closely with the other members of the NPBEA for more than a year to develop the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The two groups held two public comment periods, conducted numerous focus groups, and established a 13-member working group to process the feedback and finalize the standards. A number of experts made valuable contributions to the project. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of School Principals (NASSP), and the

American Association of School Administrators (AASA) were influential in the construct of the standards.

### **What's New About the PSEL and RISEL?**

Both sets of standards have a clearer emphasis on students and student learning. The standards include areas of leadership that are more researched and understood today. These new standards recognize the importance of relationships and interactions in leadership, teaching and student learning as well as the need for academic rigor.

NPBEA describes the standards as grounded in the present but also represent aspirational expectations in recognition of a changing world. The PSEL were developed to also challenge the profession to strive for a better future and to inspire leaders to stretch themselves to reach excellence at all stages of ones' career.

### **How Can The PSEL and RISEL Be Used?**

The standards in both sets are interdependent and are "model" standards. As described in the full PSEL document, they articulate expectations and serve as a compass to guide direction. They do not prescribe specific actions. Individuals working with the standards adapt application and integration according to circumstance and context. Standards are also used by policy makers, professional development providers, preparation providers, professional associations and the public to understand and support the work of leaders. They are the first step in developing more specific skills, dispositions, knowledge and other characteristics needed by educational leaders to achieve success for students. The standards guide preparation and development. They can also be used to guide district hiring and development systems.

### **Conclusion**

For more information about the national PSEL standards and the development process of the PSEL Standards visit [www.npbea.org/psel](http://www.npbea.org/psel) . Rhode Island used the PSEL standards as a starting place for the RISEL development and included introductory information here to provide additional context for RI educators.

The revised Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders communicate the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills required of highly capable leaders who are focused on student success. RIDE will implement the revised standards by collaborating with educators across the state to ensure a common understanding of the standards, develop aligned preparation and development programs, identify matching leadership competencies, and foster strong leadership in our schools. These standards will serve as a footprint as we look forward to working with Rhode Island educators. This document is not a static document. It will be reviewed and revised to reflect future research, expectations, and understanding of leadership work.

# Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leaders

## *Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values*

Effective educational leaders collaboratively develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and social and emotional well-being of each student.

### *Effective Leaders:*

- a. Collaboratively develop a mission for the district/school to promote the academic success and social and emotional well-being of each student.
- b. Develop and promote a vision for the district/school, in collaboration with members of the school community, on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such practices.
- c. Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the district's/ school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement.
- d. Continuously review the district's/ school's mission and vision and make adjustments to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.
- e. Develop a shared understanding of and commitment to the mission, vision, and core values within the district/school and the community.
- f. Model and pursue the district's/school's mission, vision, and core values as fundamental in all aspects of leadership.

## ***Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Responsibilities***

Effective educational leaders act ethically and in accordance with professional standards to promote each student's academic success and social and emotional well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.
- b. Act according to and promote the professional traits of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.
- c. Place the needs of children at the center of all educational decision making and accept responsibility for each student's academic and social and emotional success.
- d. Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity.
- e. Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.
- f. Provide moral direction for the district/school community and promote expected ethical and professional behavior among all staff and district/school community members.

## ***Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness***

Effective educational leaders ensure equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and social and emotional well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in all interactions, decision-making, and practice and ensure that each student, staff member, and school community member is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of culture and context.
- b. Recognize, respect, and employ each student’s strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
- c. Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.
- d. Develop student policies and address student behavior in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.
- e. Confront and challenge institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, socio-economic status, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
- f. Prepare students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.
- g. Consider and address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

## ***Standard 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment***

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and social and emotional well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.
- b. Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and vertically across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.
- c. Facilitate instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of student learning and development, effective pedagogy, and individual student needs.
- d. Ensure instructional practices that are intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognize student strengths, and are differentiated and personalized.
- e. Promote and facilitate the effective use of technology in service of teaching and learning.
- f. Develop and utilize multiple valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of learning and development and technical standards of measurement to monitor student progress and improve instruction.
- g. Use assessment data appropriately and with technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.

## ***Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students***

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and the social and emotional well-being of each student.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.
- b. Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.
- c. Develop and lead coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.
- d. Endorse and foster adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.
- e. Cultivate and reinforce student engagement and leadership and positive student behavior.
- f. Infuse the district's/school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the community.

## ***Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel***

Effective educational leaders, in collaboration with stakeholders, develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and ensure their development into an educationally effective faculty.
- b. Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of personnel.
- c. Develop teachers’ and staff members’ professional knowledge, skills, and instructional practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by an understanding of adult professional learning and development of adults as professional and ongoing learners.
- d. Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers’ and staff members’ knowledge, skills, and practice.
- e. Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.
- f. Develop the leadership capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and for other professionals in the district.
- g. Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff.
- h. Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

## ***Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff***

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and social and emotional well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Support a workplace culture that is open, productive, caring, and trusting.
- b. Develop a culture for professional staff that promotes the improvement of practice through research and effective professional learning and promotes high levels of student learning.
- c. Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the district/school.
- d. Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement.
- e. Ensure mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.
- f. Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.
- g. Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.
- h. Enable faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.

## ***Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community***

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.
- b. Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students.
- c. Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the district/school, students, needs, problems, challenges and accomplishments.
- d. Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the district/school.
- e. Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.
- f. Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school empowerment.
- g. Openly advocate for the district and school, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities with families and the community.
- h. Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.

## ***Standard 9. Operations and Management***

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the district/ school.
- b. Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling educators and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs.
- c. Acquire, and manage fiscal, physical environment, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning; professional capacity; and family and community engagement.
- d. Act responsibly and in an ethical manner with the district's/ school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting, spending and accounting practices.
- e. Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption and create an environment where students are able to learn.
- f. Employ systems to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management.
- g. Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement.
- h. Know, comply with, and help the district/ school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.
- i. Develop productive professional relationships with the district office staff, school staff, and the school board so as to promote effective transitions and student success.
- j. Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.
- k. Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the district's/school's mission and vision.

## ***Standard 10. School Improvement***

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

### ***Effective Leaders:***

- a. Continuously seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.
- b. Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.
- c. Prepare the district/school and community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.
- d. Employ situation ally appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.
- e. Assess and develop the capacity of staff to determine the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement
- f. Adopt a system's perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of the district/school organization, programs, and services.
- g. Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback and evaluation
- h. Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage, resilience and perseverance. Openly communicate the need for the process of and outcomes of improvement efforts.
- i. Develop and promote systems of shared leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation, innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

# Rhode Island Standards for Education Leaders

## **STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES**

Effective educational leaders collaboratively develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and social and emotional well-being of each student.

## **STANDARD 2. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Effective educational leaders act ethically and in accordance with professional standards to promote each student's academic success and social and emotional well-being.

## **STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS**

Effective educational leaders ensure equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and social and emotional well-being.

## **STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT**

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and social and emotional well-being.

## **STANDARD 5. COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and the social and emotional well-being of each student.

## **STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Effective educational leaders, in collaboration with stakeholders, develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF**

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and social and emotional well-being.

## **STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY**

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT**

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## Appendix A: Workgroup for Completing the Standards

The Workgroup for Completing the Standards was established as a subcommittee of the Rhode Island Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC)

Mario Andrade, Superintendent, Bristol Warren Regional School District

Carol Bissanti, Rhode Island Association of School Principals (RIASP)

Colleen Callahan, Ed.D, Rhode Island Board of Education and Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP)

Mary Canole, Consultant, former Rhode Island superintendent, Rhode Island Department of Education, and The Council of Chief State School Officers

Kimberly Carson, Director of Special Services, North Kingstown School Department

Norma Cole, Assistant Superintendent, Cranston Public Schools

Lisa Foehr, Director of the Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)

Yanaiza Gallant, Principal, Orlo Elementary School, East Providence, RI

Chris Kunkel, Director of Educational Leadership, Rhode Island College

Kirsten LaCroix, Director of Principal Residency Network, Center for Leadership and Educational Equity

Alexis Meyer, Leadership Fellow, Rhode Island Department of Education

Monique Maynard, Teacher, West Warwick Public Schools

Robert Mezzanotte, Principal, South Kingstown High School, South Kingstown, RI

Donald Rebello, Executive Director, Rhode Island Association of School Principals

Donna Rowland, teacher, Lincoln Public Schools

Tabitha Watjen, teacher, East Providence School Department