



2020

Education Exchange



Facilitator Guide

Dear Friends of Education,

Thank you for taking part in our strategic-planning process by volunteering to host an Education Exchange. By convening this community conversation on education, you are participating in a ground-breaking process that will shape the future of public education in Rhode Island. Our goal is to base our next strategic plan on the values, beliefs, and priorities that Rhode Islanders express through a variety of forums, including our statewide survey and the Education Exchanges such as the one you will host.

All of us have a stake in the success of public education in Rhode Island. As we develop our next strategic plan, we approach this work with a deep respect for the wisdom of all who are touched by public education and we are striving to listen as many voices as possible. We have been gathering information from a wide array of people representing the diversity of Rhode Island itself, and we have entrusted a community-based design team with the responsibility of developing and writing our next strategic plan. The plan that the team is developing will incorporate the opinions, expectations, and beliefs of all participating Rhode Islanders. Although the final plan will not reflect every opinion that Rhode Islanders express, the design team will ignore no opinion as we develop the plan.

You will play an important role as you help us collect information that will guide the work of the design team. We have created a series of activities to engage participants in meaningful conversations about their values and what they see as priorities for education in Rhode Island. Your role is to guide your group through these activities, supporting them and helping them to feel comfortable as they navigate these new ways of sharing information.

This guide contains the information you need to make your Education Exchange a success. Our hope is that, thanks to your guidance, participants will leave the Education Exchange feeling energized, excited, and invested in helping to realize the vision for public education that emerges from these conversations.

Best,



Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner

Using this Guide

Welcome! This Facilitator Guide is designed to help you set up, run, and document your organization's **Education Exchange**.

Most of the content in this Guide is written as a script to help you lead participants through a series of five activities designed to inspire dialogue and gather input: **Turn & Talk**, **Pathway Portraits**, **Drawing Priorities**, **Focus Groups**, and **Takeaways**. These five activities are presented in the appropriate sequence within this Guide, and you should follow this order when presenting.

You will notice the following features throughout this Guide:



Useful information and helpful reminders.



Hands-on tasks, including preparation and clean-up for each activity.

slide #

Cue to advance the slide deck. Slides are numbered to help you stay on track.

PAUSE

Timing cues let you know when to pause, and for how long. Write in the Resume Time next to each timing cue, using the minute marker as a guide. For example, if your event begins at 5 pm, you will write 5:15 at the minute 15 marker.

TAKE

Indicates the amount of time to take for reflections

Setting Up

Supplies

You will need the following supplies:

1. All materials provided as part of the toolkit:

- Photo release form
- Facilitator Guide
- Templates for activities
- Nametags
- Multi-colored markers
- Sticky dots
- Sticky notepads
- Pens
- Contact sheets
- FAQ about the strategic planning process

Optional

- Clipboards
- Timer
- Bell

2. Digital Camera

3. LCD projector (preferable but not required)



Staff

You will need two staff members to run this session. One person will be responsible for facilitating the session (introducing activities and managing time). The other will be responsible for handing out materials, taking photos, and providing support.



Entrance Set-Up



PREPARATION Set up a small table and chair near the entrance to your Education Exchange.

You will need the following supplies:

- Photo release forms + pens
- Contact sheets + pens
- Nametags + markers
- FAQ sheet
- Clipboards (*optional*)

Work Space



PREPARATION Ideally, participants in the Education Exchange will be seated in small groups of 4-6 people at work tables. The activities are designed to engage small groups in conversation and collaboration, and they require a hard surface for writing and drawing. There should be at least four tables or work spaces defined, and six tables are preferable.

If your room is less than ideal, don't worry! You can make it work. Some ideas:

In a classroom? Pull together small clusters of 4-6 desk chairs into circles.

Long cafeteria or conference-room tables?

If tables can be separated, pull them apart and arrange 4-6 chairs (or 2 benches) around each. If not, cluster chairs in groups of 4-6 along the table, with space in between the groups.

Materials Set-Up



PREPARATION Designate a spot in the room from which your assistant can easily distribute templates for each activity, and stack the blank paper templates there, neatly organized by activity. In the center of each table or work space, place:

- 1 pad of sticky notes
- 2 sheets of colored dots
- 6-8 markers of assorted colors

Media Set-Up



PREPARATION If you have a projector, please plan to show the Education Exchange slide deck, which will be provided to each facilitator in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. To prepare, please load the presentation onto your computer, connect the projector, and project either onto a screen or onto a blank, light-colored wall that can be easily viewed by people seated in their work groups.



TIP Test your media presentation at least an hour before your Education Exchange, leaving time for trouble-shooting in case you encounter technical difficulties.

Pathway Portraits

15 Minutes

Start Time: _____

End Time: _____

(minute 10)

(minute 25)



PREPARATION Ask your assistant to distribute the PATHWAYS PORTRAITS template—one per participant.



TIP You may want to hold up one of the templates yourself, and refer to it as you guide participants through this exercise.

slide 4

One of the goals of public education is to help prepare our students to be ready for life beyond school. Our next activity focuses on what we want our students to know and be able to do, in order to define and achieve their own success. We're going to create a map of the pathway our young people will follow to reach their goals.

Start by choosing a young person between the ages of 0 and 18 that you know. Ideally, this should be someone you know well: you understand what they like and don't like, their talents and their challenges. I'll give you a few seconds to choose your person. If you don't know any young people now, feel free to think about one you have known in the past.

At the starting point, write down the age of the young person you selected. At the goal, write the age that the young person will be in the year 2030 (15 years from now). For example: If the young person you are thinking of is 15 now, he will be 30 in 2030. If the young person you are thinking of is 6 now, she will be 21 in 2030. Go ahead and write that age at the goal.

PAUSE 10 seconds

slide 5

Take a moment to think about everything you know about that kid. For example:

What do they love to do?

What makes them want to slam doors?

What are they really, really good at?

What is hard for them?

PAUSE 10 seconds

Resume Time: _____ (minute 12)

slide 6

Now imagine who he or she will be in 2030, and jot down a few notes at the goal. Try to picture who they will evolve into if they strive to become their best possible selves. For example:

What might their job or career be?

What do they love to do?

What do they care about?

Remember to keep your responses short and try to write so that others can read it! Just write a few words to define two or three goals.

PAUSE 30 seconds **Resume Time:** _____ (minute 13)

slide 7

Now, we've all defined some goals for these young people. How can we best prepare them for this future? Our task as a state is to design a public education system that helps our young people achieve their goals.

It won't always be an easy path, so let's throw a few challenges in the way: some roadblocks, obstacles, and jagged cliffs. Identify a problem your young person has already faced and write that challenge down in the first obstacle box on the path.

PAUSE 30 seconds **Resume Time:** _____ (minute 14)

Now write or draw some of the challenges that life may throw in his or her way in the obstacle boxes ahead on the path.

PAUSE 30 seconds **Resume Time:** _____ (minute 15)

slide 8

What skills will our young person need in order to overcome those obstacles and reach their goals?

Under the **HEAD** icon, write down 2-3 things that he or she will need to know in order to find success. This can include academic content and other kinds of knowledge as well. Remember to use single words or short phrases.

Under the **HAND** icon, write what she will need to be able to do in order to achieve her goals. What skills are necessary? What habits of mind?

Under the **HEART** icon, write down what will motivate your hero to keep going and inspire him to persist toward that goal, even when the going gets rough.

PAUSE 3 minutes **Resume Time:** _____ (minute 18)

Great work! Now, let's take a few minutes to share your maps. Are there a few volunteers who feel ready to spend a minute or two sharing their work? We should have time to hear from 3 or 4 people.



TIP Ask volunteers to stand and hold their map up so that it's visible to other participants. Encourage them to speak in a loud, clear voice.

TAKE 7 minutes **Start Time:** _____ (minute 18)
End Time: _____ (minute 25)



CLEAN UP As the reflection is wrapping up, ask your assistant to collect the **PATHWAY PORTRAITS** templates and stack them neatly.

Drawing Priorities

30 Minutes Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
(minute 25) (minute 55)



PREPARATION Ask your assistant to distribute the stacks of DRAWING PRIORITIES templates. There are four different topics. Each table or group needs one stack of templates with the same question. If you have more than four tables or work spaces, divide the stacks so that two tables will have the same topic; the most important thing is that everyone at a given table has the same topic.

The participants are going to use the colored dots for this exercise. Make sure there are enough dots at each table for each person to use three.

slide 9

Thinking back to the conversation we've just had about the skills and knowledge we want our learners to have, let's now use that information to help imagine schools of the future. We want you to look ahead to the year 2030 and imagine how schools might change.

slide 10

Our guiding question for this activity is:
How should Rhode Island schools in the year 2030 look and feel to help our students be successful?

slide 11

Each of your tables has one of the following four questions:

1. What will teaching and learning look like?
2. What will learning environments look like?
3. What will the culture of the school feel like?
4. How will schools and communities intersect?

Each of your tables will tackle one of these questions.

We invite you to totally re-imagine what schools could look like or be. Don't be afraid to think boldly; even if your idea seems crazy, even if you can immediately imagine 10 reasons why it won't work, it may inspire a creative solution that could actually happen.

Before anyone starts drawing, we'll spend a few minutes sharing thoughts and ideas with a table-wide conversation about each question. As you're talking, jot down big ideas in a few words on sticky notes—one per note—and stick them in the center of your table. We'll be using those later. Go ahead and start talking about the question at your table now.

PAUSE 5 minutes

Resume Time: _____ (minute 32)



TIP It can be tricky to get people's attention once they are engrossed in conversation. Try a bell, or another audio signal, to let people know it's time to move on.

Now, look at the notes and choose one that you're most interested in exploring further. You'll have about 8 minutes to make a drawing or a diagram to illustrate that idea. It's fine for more than one person to select the same idea to explore.

Each drawing should contain just one big idea. Use diagrams and images to show us your response. Remember, stick figures and simple drawings are totally fine! You can use some words, but try to use just a few and make them as clear to read as possible—most of your ideas should be communicated through the pictures; words are used more to label than to communicate your idea. This slide shows some examples.

Notice that there is space at the bottom of the page for you to summarize the big idea of your drawing with a single phrase or sentence. Make sure you write this summary! All of your drawings will be given to the design team, but it's your big idea that will be most important, so please be sure to write it clearly and keep it short and simple.

PAUSE 8 minutes

Resume Time: _____ (minute 41)



TIP Move around the room and check out people's drawings as they work. You may want to ask a clarifying question or two if a diagram or big idea statement seems unclear.

Great. Now clear some space on your table or work surface and lay your drawings out. We'll take 5 minutes to walk around and check out one another's drawings. Before you get up, everyone needs to grab 3 colored dots from the sheets on your table. It doesn't matter which color you use, they all mean "Tell me more!" As you walk around, you are going to place these dots on the drawings that interest you the most. This is not a competition, we are just trying to get a sense of which ideas are exciting to you.

PAUSE 4 minutes

Resume Time: _____ (minute 45)



Do Your assistant should be circulating during the Gallery Walk, doing a rough tally of the drawings attracting the most dots, and should select 4-5 drawings and bring them to the front as the Gallery Walk concludes.

OK, now let's hear more about the drawings you were most interested in. Who created this one? Come on up to the front and tell us about your vision. Hold up your drawing, and present it in a loud, clear voice.

TAKE 10 minutes

Start Time: _____ (minute 45)

End Time: _____ (minute 55)



CLEAN UP As the reflection is wrapping up, ask your assistant to collect the DRAWING PRIORITIES templates and stack them neatly.

Focus Groups

25 Minutes Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
(minute 55) (minute 80)



PREPARATION Your assistant should put one FOCUS GROUP template set on each table. There are 6 sets, each with a different topic heading. If you only have four tables, you will have two small groups at two of the tables—set them up at each end. If this seems tight, you could organize a couple of groups on the floor! If you do have more than four tables, use six so that you have one group at each table. Point to each table as you name it.

slide 13

For our final activity, we're going to break up into six small groups. Each group will have a different theme, and each group will discuss their answers to 3 questions based on that theme.

We want to give you an opportunity to select the theme that's closest to your heart, so let's take a moment to self-organize into groups, by table. The topics are:

slide 14

- (Table 1) Teaching + Learning
- (Table 2) Community Partnerships / Special Projects
- (Table 3) Learning Environments
- (Table 4) Evaluation/Assessment
- (Table 5) Innovation + Technology
- (Table 6) Resources

If there's more than one topic area that interests you, try to balance the groups by joining the less popular of your choices.

PAUSE 2 minutes *Allow people to move to their new table or work space*

Resume Time: _____ (minute 58)

You'll notice that some of the topics could relate to more than one thing... for example, Evaluation + Assessment could mean assessment of student performance or evaluation of teacher or school performance. The categories have been left open on purpose, in order to encourage you to think about them in more than one way.

I'm going to ask a question, and each table should have a 5-minute conversation about that question, thinking about your table's particular theme as you answer. So, for example, the Teaching + Learning group will answer the question as it relates to teaching and learning, while the Resources group will think about funding and other resources as they answer.

slide 15

Okay, let's start discussion question number 1. Find the sheet that says **SUCSESSES** and put it in the center of your table. As you're talking, write down key ideas on this sheet—one thought or phrase per square, using just

a few words. Don't feel like you need to fill all 12 spaces. And if you do fill all of them and want to write more, you can flip the page over and write on the back.

What do you feel is going well with education and schools in Rhode Island, specific to your topic area? What successes should we expand upon?

You have five minutes to discuss this question.

PAUSE 5 minutes Resume Time: _____ (minute 65)

slide 16

Okay, let's move on to discussion question number 2. Find the sheet that says CHALLENGES and put it in the middle of your table.

Here's the next question:

What are the challenges we face within each program area? What are the barriers to success?

Again, you have 5 minutes to respond to this question at your table.

PAUSE 5 minutes Resume Time: _____ (minute 70)

slide 17

Okay, the final discussion question.

This one goes on the sheet labeled **PRIORITIES**:

Given the successes and challenges identified, what do we need to focus on to arrive at the goals we identified earlier for our students and our schools?

If it helps you to organize your thoughts, imagine that each phrase you generate completes the sentence "Focus on...". Take 5 minutes to answer this question as a group.

PAUSE 5 minutes Resume Time: _____ (minute 75)

Now let's take a few minutes to share what priorities have been identified by each table. I'll ask each table to pick one person to very briefly share some of the "Focus On" priorities—your responses to just that final question. Which table would like to go first?

TAKE 5 minutes Start Time: _____ (minute 75)
End Time: _____ (minute 80)



CLEAN UP Ask your assistant to collect the FOCUS GROUPS templates and stack them neatly while you lead the final reflection.

Takeaways

10 Minutes Start Time: _____ End Time: _____
(minute 80) (minute 90)

slide 18

Thanks to everyone for taking the time to participate in this important conversation, for sharing your thoughts openly and honestly, and for being brave enough to try some new ways of sharing ideas. We have just a few minutes left, so let's take some time to reflect on this process and the conversations we've just had.

What insights felt particularly important to you?

Did anything surprise you?

What themes or priorities seemed especially pressing?

Documentation & Delivery



TO DO Within one week of your Education Exchange, please photograph and email images of all the work that was produced.

We recommend using a digital camera capable of taking high resolution images (3 megapixels or more). If you do not have a digital camera available, you can use a smartphone camera. *You may need to change the settings if the default image size on your phone is not set to the highest quality setting.*

Keep the products created by your participants organized by activity, and photograph the work from each activity in sequence (first all of the Pathway Portraits, next all of the Drawing Priorities, finally all of the Focus Groups sheets).

Find a bright, evenly-lit work surface with a neutral color, and clear it of other papers and objects. A clean floor works well, since you will need to photograph the images from above! Photograph the drawings one at a time, and take just one photograph of each drawing (or delete any rejected images).

Hold the camera lens so that it is parallel with your paper, and position it directly above the drawing so that all of the corners form right angles. Make sure that the drawing fills as much of the frame as possible without cutting off any edges. Hold steady while you snap the photo, so that it will be clear and legible.

Check each image for clarity and position, and delete and re-photograph any images that don't meet these standards.

Review the candid photographs taken during the Education Exchange, and choose the five that are of best quality and best represent your event.

When all of the images all ready, please save the picture files to your computer. Name each picture file using the name or acronym of your organization and the number of each image (eg. UWRI_1, UWRI_2, etc).

To send us your files, use the easy file-sharing service called WeTransfer.

1. Go to the website, **www.wetransfer.com**
2. Click **+Add Files**
3. Use the file browser to select all of your photos. While holding the shift key, click the first file and then the final file, so that all files are selected.
4. Click "Open"
5. Click "Friend's email" and type **EdVoicesRI@ride.ri.gov**
6. Click "Your email" and type your own email address
7. Click "Transfer"



Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
401.222.4600

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