State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

Enclosure 5d
February 8, 2022

February 8, 2022

TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner

RE: **Approval of an update to *Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success* the Rhode Island Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education**

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) led the development of *Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success*, Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education for 2021-2025. The strategic plan was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders across the state including students, families, school leaders, staff and community members. The plan incorporates the foundational guidance provided by the Commissioner's vision for education and the Rhode Island Foundation's *Chart a Course, Stay the Course* plan.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to unify students, families, and educators across the state around the priorities and commitments that will advance opportunities for all Rhode Island students. *Together Through Opportunity* provides a clear framework and outcomes that fosters partnership, values diversity, increases transparency, is results driven and above all puts kids first.

At the December 8, 2020, meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, the Council approved Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education for 2021-2025.

In the time since this approval, RIDE's work has been guided by the plan's priorities and measures; however, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact nearly every aspect of State's education system. The initial plan was written before RIDE had much data on the pandemic's effects; RIDE now has robust data on how dramatic the impacts of the pandemic have been.

Additionally, the RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) developed a strategic plan for postsecondary education that covers the time period 2022-2027—an end date two years later than the 2025 timeframe in RIDE's strategic plan.

Therefore, RIDE is proposing extending the target date for all goals in the RIDE strategic plan from 2025 to 2027. The goals and all other elements of the plan will remain unchanged; only the timeline is being modified from 2021-2025 to 2021-2027. This will provide a more realistic timeframe to achieve the goals outlined in the RIDE strategic plan, given the large and continuing impact of COVID. It will also allow RIDE and OPC to build a unified strategic plan for elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education on an aligned timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION: That, the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the *Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success*, Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education for 2021-2027, as presented.

The R.I. Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability.

Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success

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

RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

Note from Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green

Dec. 2020

Dear Community,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Note from Chair Barbara Cottam

Dec. 2020

Dear Community,

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Barbara Cottam
Chair, Rhode Island Board of Education

RIDE

Rhode Island
Department
of Education

Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success

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

The Strategic Plan..... 1

Mission and Vision..... 3

Theory of Action..... 5

Values..... 7

Priorities..... 9

Equity Priority and Goals..... 11

Excellence in Learning Priority and Goals..... 13

Engaged Communities Priority and Goals..... 15

World Class Talent Priority and Goals..... 17

Governance Structures Priority and Goals..... 19

Implementation Roadmap..... 21

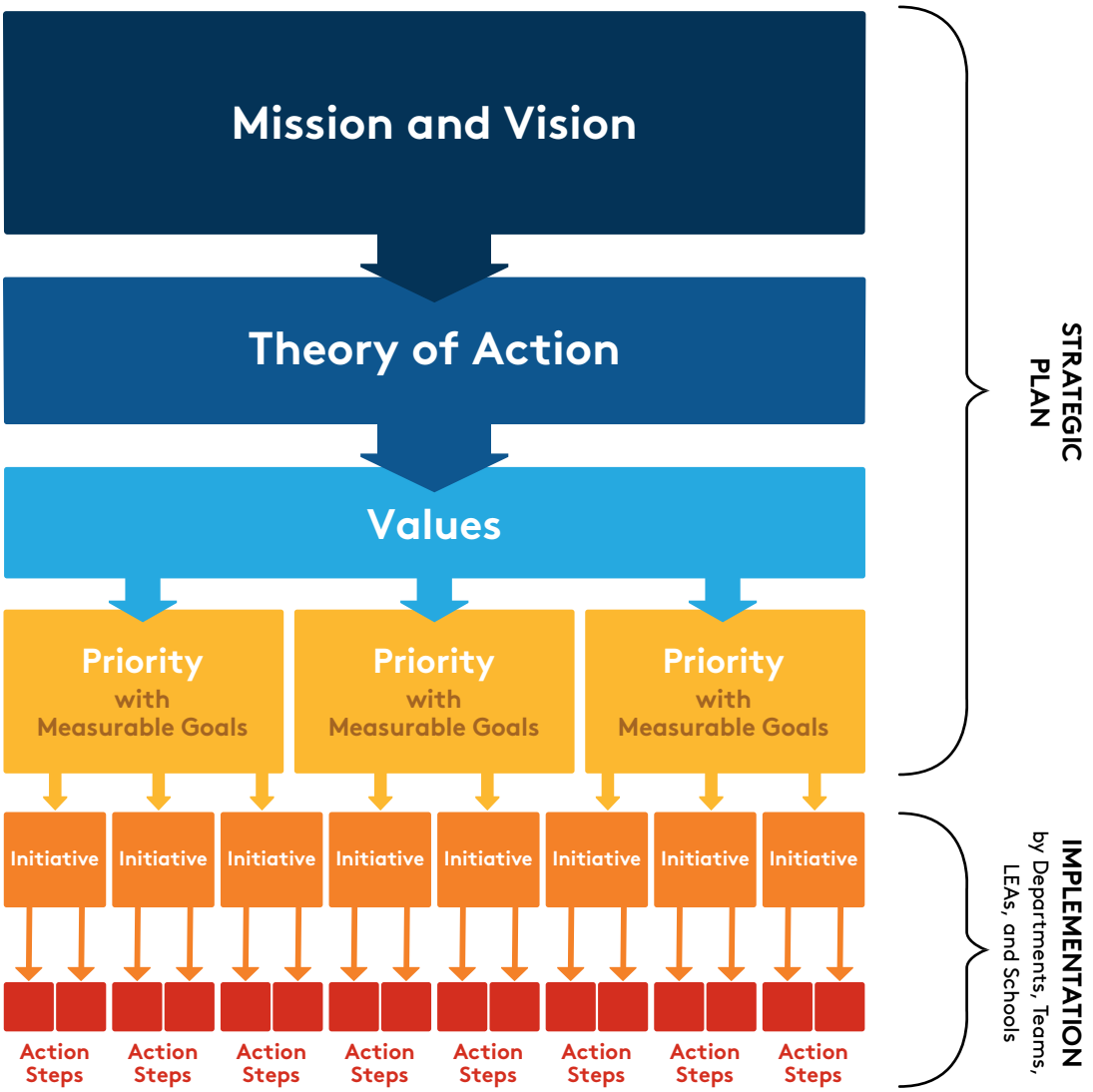
The Strategic Plan

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

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

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

Priority Framework:



Mission and Vision

Mission

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

1. To lead and support districts, schools, and communities through a unified, strategic direction for education in the state.

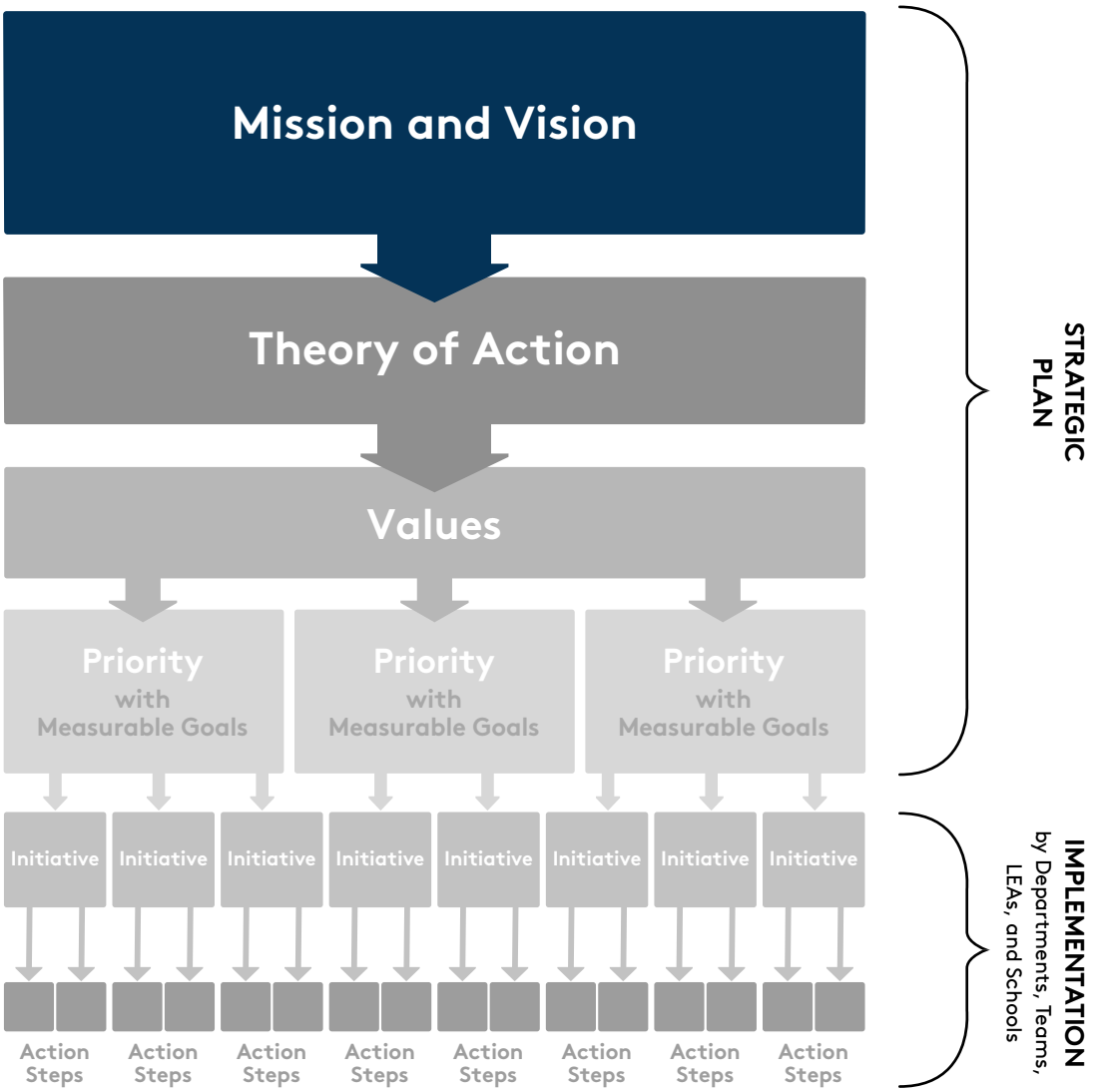
2. To use policy, advocacy, and governance structures to create an environment that advances opportunities for all students.

3. To maintain collaboration and efficiency in the department that enables innovation, agility, and continuous learning.

Vision

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

Priority Framework:



Theory of Action

If RIDE...

1. **Sets a high bar for educational excellence** that is based on the belief that all students can and will achieve great outcomes,

2. **Develops policies and practices that enable all students to achieve this high bar** for excellence through school-based services that are supported by the district and state,

3. **Engages stakeholders to co-develop core policies and practices** in response to community needs, and

4. **Partners with schools and districts to adapt their practices** and address the unique challenges that keep students from achieving great outcomes,

Then RIDE can...

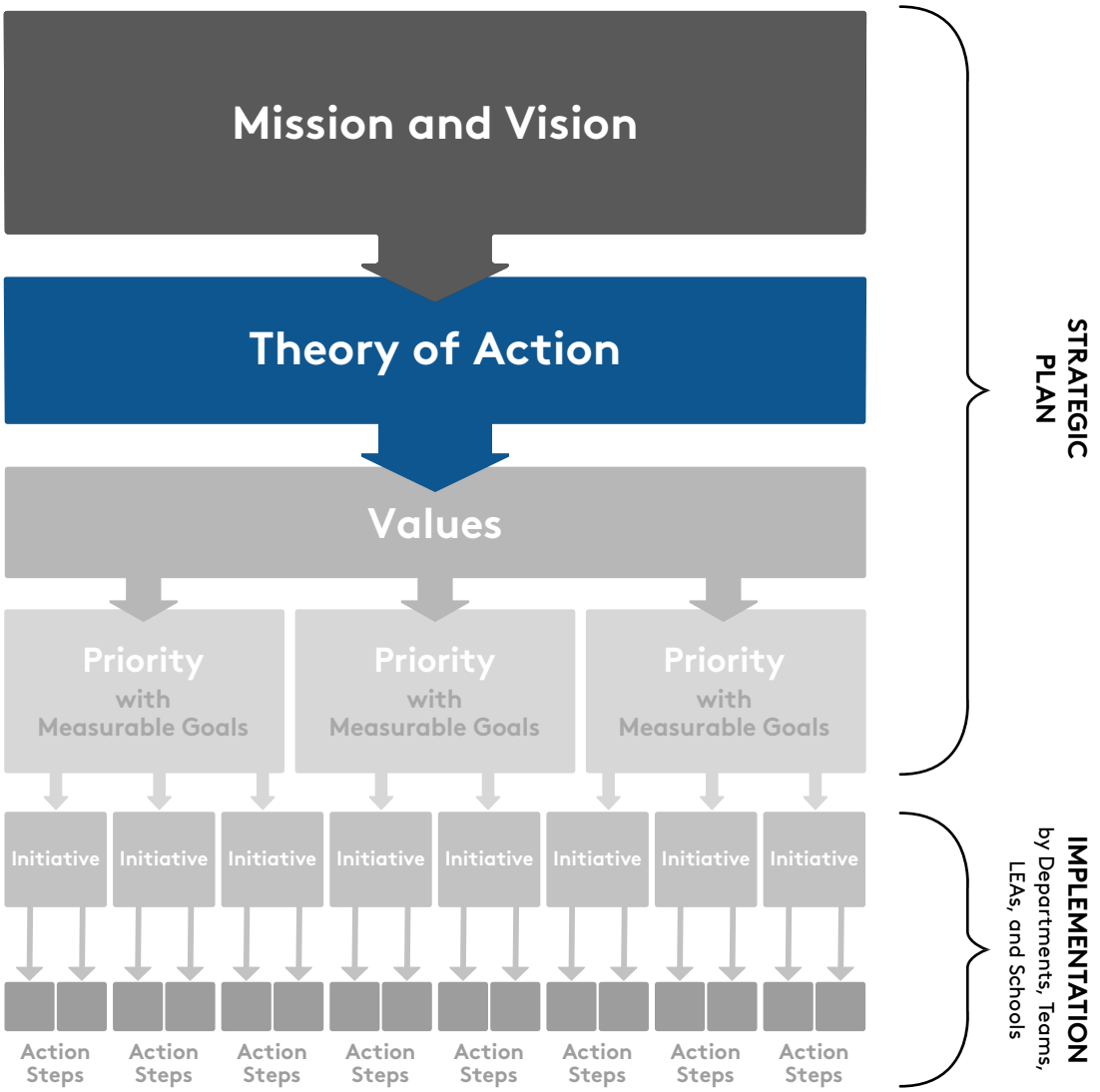
1. Ensure all schools **meet or exceed the high bar** set for educational excellence and student outcomes, and

2. Partner with districts and schools to **create conditions that meaningfully improve student learning** and growth,

So that...

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

Priority Framework:



Values

Students First

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

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

Partnership

We co-create opportunities for students with community members.

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

Diversity

We create equitable pathways to success for staff and students.

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

Transparency

We share information and decisions transparently with our partners.

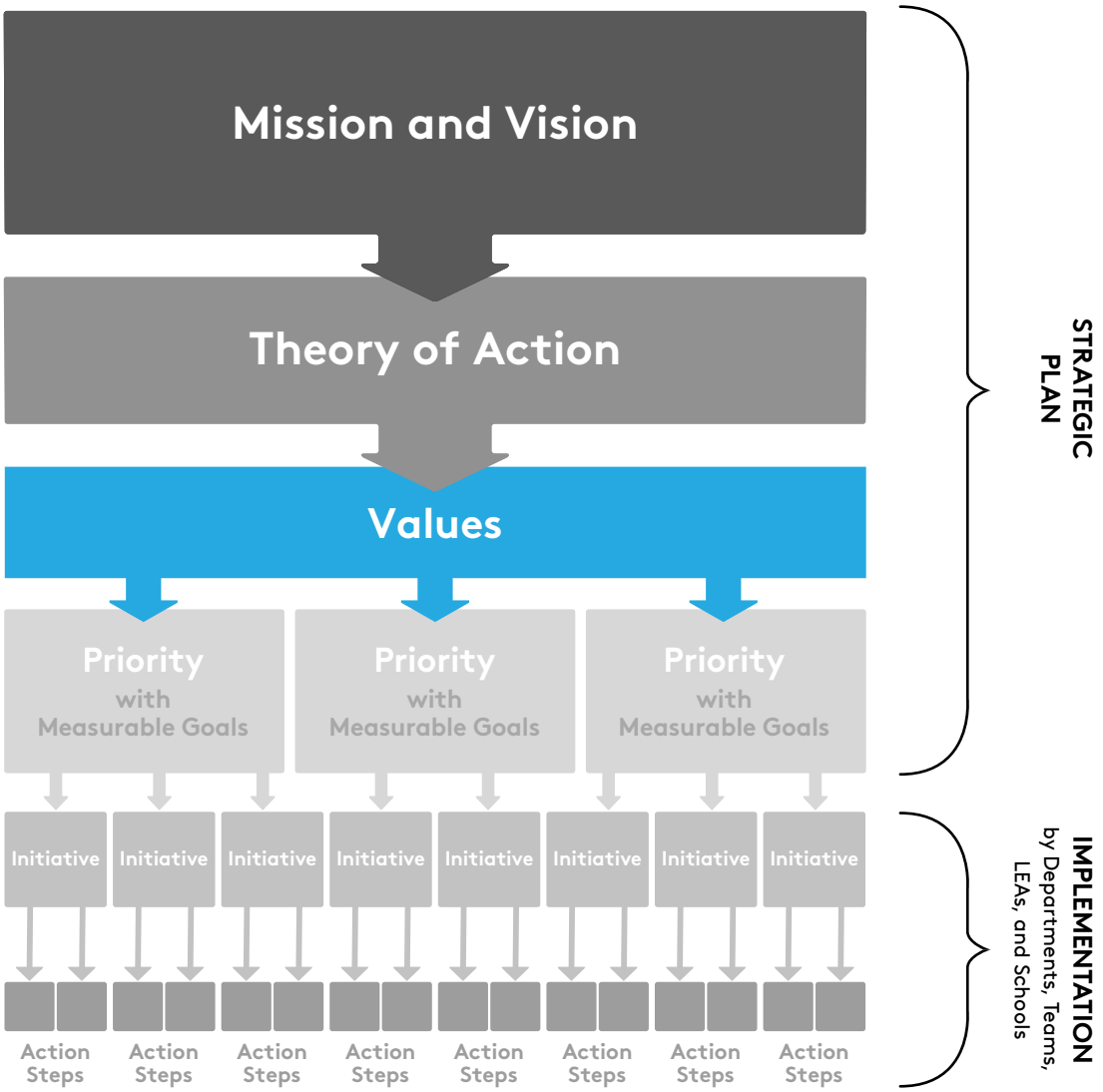
We share transparent, accessible information both internally and externally with stakeholders so that decisions can be made thoughtfully, based on data, to benefit all students.

Results

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

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

Priority Framework:



Priorities

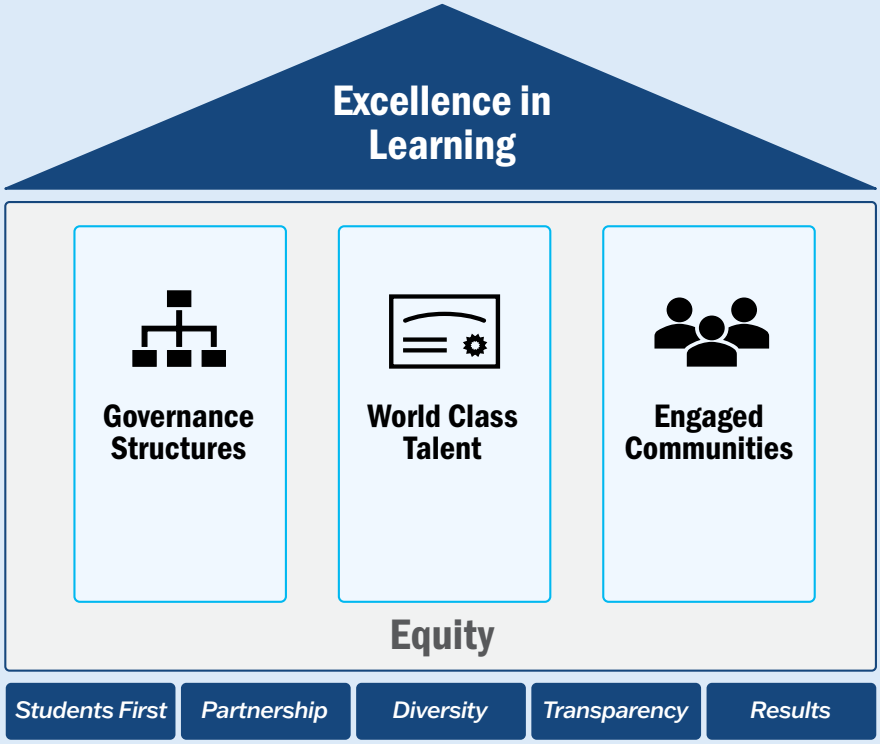
1 Equity
See page 11

2 Excellence in Learning
See page 13

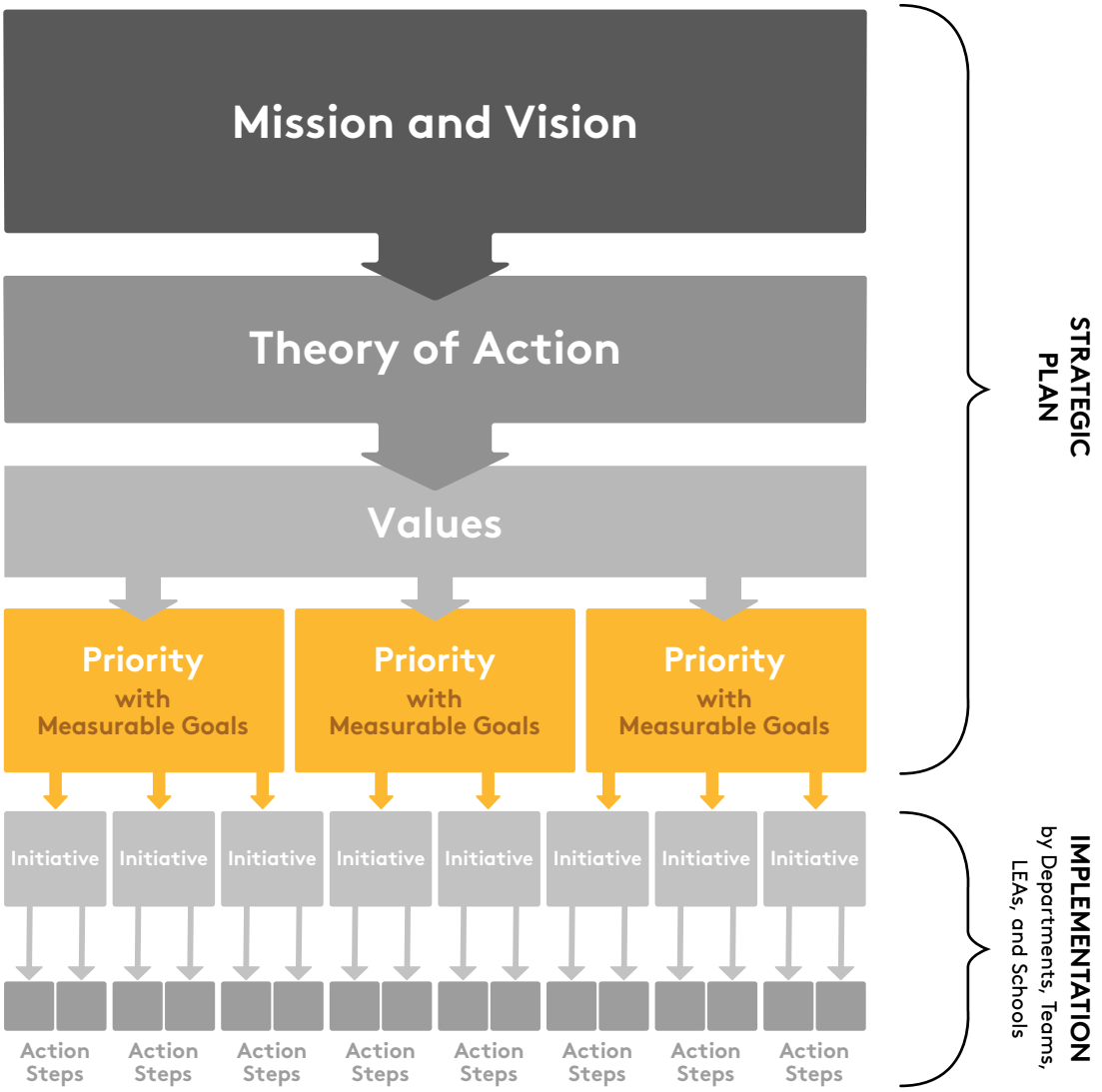
3 Engaged Communities
See page 15

4 World Class Talent
See page 17

5 Governance Structures
See page 19



Priority Framework:



1 Equity Priority Statement and Goals

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

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

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

Commitments:

1. RIDE advocates for a funding formula that distributes resources equitably based on student, school, and community needs.

2. RIDE provides tools that allow schools to innovate, implement best practices, and seek out efficiencies so that funds are used to improve outcomes for historically underserved students, including multilingual learners and differently abled students.

3. RIDE develops and disseminates diversity, equity, and inclusion training and resources for all state educators, and partners with LEAs to ensure that resources are leveraged at the district level.

4. RIDE creates conditions that allow all LEAs to recruit and retain experienced teachers and school leaders that reflect the ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity of their student population.

5. RIDE uses a consistent process to evaluate the impact of formal policy decisions on schools and students, applying an equity lens.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, all students in every LEA will achieve at least one year's worth of learning annually based on the Student Growth Index.

2. By July 2027, the gap in the percent of inexperienced teachers and school leaders in high and low poverty schools will close. To achieve this goal, the share of inexperienced teachers in high poverty schools will decrease from 21% to 12%. The share of inexperienced school leaders in high poverty schools will decrease from 29% to 25%.

3. By June 2021, 100% of RIDE teams will use the Equity Decision Making Tool as a consistent, explicit step in teams' formal decision-making practices as measured by a staff survey and leader observations.

2 Excellence in Learning Priority and Goals

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

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

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

Commitments:

1. RIDE provides support and resources that allow every district to adopt and implement high-quality curriculum materials.

2. RIDE sustains a statewide assessment system that informs professional learning and operational support.

3. RIDE develops and implements policies that have a fundamental goal of closing equity gaps and increasing proficiency for all students, including those who are underserved and diverse learners.

4. RIDE supports LEAs in developing and implementing innovative pathways aligned to students' interests, needs, and careers, and providing opportunities for internships and work experience through Career and Technical Education.

5. RIDE ensures LEAs and schools maintain 21st century learning environments with a blend of physical and digital tools that allow students to develop skills and relationships that will prepare them for success after high school.

6. RIDE partners with LEAs to strengthen school culture and create safe and supportive school environments.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, 75% of students will achieve proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science, as measured by the RICAS, SAT, NGSA, and DLM Alternative assessments, an increase of 35% in ELA, 45% in math, and 44% in science.

2. By July 2027, the percent of students who are chronically absent will decrease by 11 percentage points, from 21% to 10%.

3. By July 2027, the state 4-year graduation rate will increase by 11 percentage points, from 84% to 95%.

4. By July 2027, the percent of students who report a feeling of belonging in their school will increase from 68% to 90% in grades 3- 5, and from 43% to 65% in grades 6 – 12.

5. By July 2027, the percent of students who report they are interested in their classes will increase from 63% to 80% in grades 3 – 5, and from 33% to 60% in grades 6 – 12.

3 Engaged Communities Priority and Goals

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

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

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

Commitments:

1. RIDE centers community perspectives in its decision-making processes to determine where to make key investments that improve student learning.

2. RIDE adapts policies and practices to be more student-centered based on feedback from families, communities, and school-based staff.

3. RIDE promotes and provides holistic supports for children and families based on specific needs identified by both the community and the state.

4. RIDE forges outcomes-based partnerships with community organizations and industries to broaden the scope of services for students.

5. RIDE clarifies the entry points through which community members and other stakeholders can play a role in decision making in partnership with the agency, including community meetings, surveys, or other channels.

6. RIDE identifies and communicates, for all major decision making, the level of community involvement that will be required.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, the percent of families who report a favorable opinion of their child's school culture and instructional decisions will increase from 69% to 80%.

2. By July 2027, the percent of families who report they are meaningfully engaged in their child's learning will increase from 69% to 80%.

3. By July 2021, RIDE will set and monitor progress towards an ambitious goal for the use of stakeholder feedback in RIDE decisions to be achieved by July 2027.

4 World Class Talent Priority and Goals

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

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

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

Commitments:

1. RIDE supports LEAs in developing strategies to attract, recruit, and retain a highly-skilled and diverse workforce that reflects Rhode Island's students.

2. RIDE creates flexible pathways into the teaching profession and develops programs aimed to expand and diversify the educator pipeline.

3. RIDE promotes and provides high-quality professional learning for educators and situates professional learning at the center of improvement.

4. RIDE creates conditions that allow for leadership development and opportunities for career advancement for educators at the state, LEA, and school levels.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, the percent of educators who report they have engaged in professional development opportunities that are valuable and relevant will increase. This growth will be reflected in a 45% to 80% increase for teachers, a 47% to 80% increase for support professionals, and a 67% to 80% increase for school leaders.

2. By July 2027, the percent of students who report that the teachers in their building are supportive and effective will increase from 80% to 90% in grades 3 – 5 and from 60% to 70% in grades 6 – 12.

3. By July 2021, RIDE will set and monitor progress towards an ambitious recruitment and retention rate for teachers of color across the state to be achieved by July 2027.

5 Governance Structures Priority and Goals

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

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

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

Commitments:

1. RIDE sets high expectations for how LEAs will serve students and families and provides LEAs with the guidance and resources needed to meet these expectations.

2. RIDE equips school leaders with the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about how students are supported.

3. RIDE maintains clear communication with LEAs, schools, and communities. RIDE shares information with LEAs that is timely, consistent, and comprehensive.

4. RIDE is nimble in using feedback to adjust policies, resource allocations, and decision making to best meet student needs.

Measurable Goals:

1. By July 2027, the percent of school leaders who report that they have the autonomy and information to make key decisions around scheduling, resource allocation, and hiring and assigning staff will increase from 75% to 85%.

2. By July 2027, the percent of families that report they are involved in key school improvement decisions will increase from 41% to 50%.

3. By July 2021, RIDE will set and monitor progress towards a goal for the percentage of LEA leaders that believe RIDE is timely and effective in its responsiveness, to be achieved by July 2027.

RIDE

Rhode Island
Department
of Education