

RESULTS
Education in Rhode Island
2010



RIPEC

RIPEC Mission Statement

RIPEC is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan public policy research and education organization dedicated to the advancement of effective, efficient and equitable government in Rhode Island.

Through in-depth research, program monitoring, advocacy and public information activities, RIPEC:

- Suggests approaches to help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government agencies;
- Promotes fiscal responsibility and sound management practices;
- Assists elected officials and their staffs in the development of sound policies and programs;
- Enhances understanding between the private sector and state and local governments;
- Provides objective information and conducts educational programs for the benefit of Council members, public officials, and the general public;
- Builds coalitions with other community groups to promote sound public policies; and
- Promotes a public policy agenda to foster a climate for economic opportunity.

RESULTS

Education in Rhode Island 2010

Prepared as a public service by the
Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council

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Introduction

The value of education is multi-faceted. There are clear links between education and individual well-being and self-sufficiency including higher wages and improved health outcomes. There are also benefits that accrue to society at large through lower government spending on crime, social welfare and public health, as well as extra tax revenues. Finally, education, and in particular, public education has long been recognized as fundamental to the development and maintenance of a democratic, free, prosperous society. Public schools create a shared sense of American culture, enabling our diverse society to live together and they are uniquely accountable to the communities and individuals which they serve through the democratic process.

Doubtless, education has broad benefits; however, it also represents the most significant financial investment made by states and communities across the country. As such, the question of how to provide a quality education system, something that is widely recognized as paramount to ensure economic development, at an affordable price to taxpayers, has grown increasingly important.

While the precise mechanisms of how policy decisions related to education are often subject to political ideology, the primary tool for addressing these issues is accurate and complete data. The following RIPEC report – *Education Results, 2010* – provides this foundational tool for policymakers and stakeholders to begin to address the issue of education reform in the Ocean State. This report provides data and analysis of public school performance, demographics, revenues and expenditures vis-a-vis the national average and New England states, as well as a district-to-district comparison. The publication is designed to serve as a research tool to measure how Rhode Island schools are progressing and to help identify areas where increased attention may be warranted.

In addition to this Introduction, the report is divided into seven parts:

- *Executive Summary and Comments* – provides an overview of the findings in this report and RIPEC’s perspective on the State educational system;
- *Student Performance* – evaluates Rhode Island’s performance on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP);
- *Assessment and Accountability* – includes a summary of the No Child Left Behind legislation and an update on how successful Rhode Island districts and schools have been in meeting the requirements of the act;
- *Student Demographics* – provides an overview of state and student demographics including poverty, educational attainment, special education, and limited English proficiency students;
- *School Revenues* – documents the source and amount of resources used to support education;
- *School Expenditures* – reviews how Rhode Island’s investment compares with other New England states and to the national average, as well as providing an estimate of future expenditures; and
- *Glossary* – defines terms used in the report and provides additional information on select topics such as the federal No Child Left Behind act.

The report will also be available on RIPEC’s website at: www.ripec.org

Executive Summary and Comments

A quality education system has broad positive effects – both for the individual and for society at large – that go beyond the creation and retention of jobs. For example, data from the United States Census demonstrates that, on average, reliance on the social safety net by individuals without a high school diploma or equivalent cost the State \$4,385 in 2005, while individuals with a Bachelor’s degree or higher contributed \$11,339 to the State on average (available at the RIDE Office of Adult Education website). In a separate analysis, the Alliance for Excellent Education indicates that dropouts from the class of 2008 will cost the State almost \$955 million in lost wages over their lifetimes due to the difference in earning potential between a high school graduate and a high school dropout.

At the same time, Rhode Island faces the second worst financial crisis in its history and, by many accounts, will face a longer recovery process than most other states. The State has experienced steeper job losses than other states in the region and the jobs lost – mostly in the manufacturing and construction sectors – do not show signs of returning at the same levels. Further, Rhode Island lacks a strong high-tech sector which, in other states, will help bolster recovery. If the State is to compete in the 21st century economy, it will need a well-prepared workforce that can adapt to a fluid job market requiring a wide range of skills. The current level of student performance could serve as a barrier to the State sustaining long-term economic prosperity.

A stronger education system translates into a higher quality workforce, better jobs, and a lower reliance on social services – and ultimately increases the quality of life for the individual and the quality of society at large. However, despite making progress over the past few years, Rhode Island still lags the region and nation in academic outcomes. The State underperforms relative to the national and regional averages on the SAT and the NAEP, and has a higher percentage of adults without at least a high school diploma than the other New England states and the nation. At the same time, the State continues to invest heavily in education, ranking among the top five highest-spending states in the country, spending 38.6 percent more than the national average.

Table 1
Education Outcomes and Expenditures

| | SAT 2009 Mean Scores | | | 8th Grade NAEP** At or Above Proficient | | | | Adult Educational Attainment, 2008 | | 2006-2007 Total Expenditures | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| | Verbal | Math | Total | 2009 Math | 2007 Writing | 2009 Reading | 2005 Science | < High School | College Degree+ | Amount | % of US | Rank |
| U.S. Average* | 501 | 515 | 1,016 | 33% | 31% | 32% | 27% | 15.0% | 27.7% | \$9,703 | - | - |
| Connecticut | 509 | 513 | 1,022 | 40% | 53% | 43% | 35% | 11.4% | 35.6% | \$13,664 | 140.8% | 3 |
| Maine | 468 | 467 | 935 | 35% | 38% | 35% | 34% | 10.3% | 25.4% | 11,644 | 120.0% | 11 |
| Massachusetts | 514 | 526 | 1,040 | 52% | 46% | 43% | 41% | 11.3% | 38.1% | 12,857 | 132.5% | 7 |
| New Hampshire | 523 | 523 | 1,046 | 43% | 39% | 39% | 41% | 9.1% | 33.3% | 11,037 | 113.8% | 13 |
| Rhode Island | 498 | 496 | 994 | 28% | 32% | 28% | 26% | 16.3% | 30.0% | 13,453 | 138.6% | 5 |
| Vermont | 518 | 518 | 1,036 | 43% | 41% | 41% | 41% | 9.4% | 32.1% | 13,629 | 140.5% | 4 |

*US average includes District of Columbia

** Data is for the most recent year available

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Data set and "The Nation's Report Card"; College Board, "2009 College-bound Seniors"; US Bureau of the Census; and RIPEC calculations

Undoubtedly, demographic characteristics, such as poverty, have an impact on student performance. For example, there is a clear difference between the demographic composition and performance of the State's urban districts and the rest of Rhode Island, as identified in this report. At the same time, poverty alone does not fully explain educational outputs in Rhode Island. National data show that Rhode Island ranked 23rd highest in the country for the percentage of free/reduced lunch eligible students in 2007-08 and 20th highest in Education Week's "Chance for Success" index, a composite index of 13 indicators including family income, parental education, employment status and annual income. However, the State ranked 38th highest in the percent of 8th graders who achieved the distinction of *proficient* in the math section of the NAEP, and 40th highest in the percent of 8th graders who scored *proficient* on the reading assessment.

The work done by the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Board of Regents to develop a comprehensive education reform strategy should be acknowledged as a positive first step towards education reform in the State. That Rhode Island was selected as one of 16 finalists in the first round of the "Race to the Top" grant application and 8th overall is a signal that these changes have been recognized at the national level as well. The five primary components of the Department's "Strategic Agenda" – ensuring educator excellence, accelerating all schools toward greatness, establishing world-class standards and assessments, developing user-friendly data systems, and investing resources wisely – are initiatives supported by RIPEC. However, if the State is to be successful in Phase II of the "Race to the Top" initiative it, along with all stakeholders, must work to demonstrate that the funding is used wisely to achieve these goals, and real change, rather than to simply supplement the current system.

This edition of the *Results Report – Education in Rhode Island* provides a range of information on many facets of the Ocean State's educational system and demonstrates that Rhode Island faces a number of critical educational challenges, specifically:

1. Maintaining momentum in student achievement and closing performance gaps

The success Rhode Island has had in decreasing the performance gap relative to New Hampshire and Vermont is laudable. Since the first administration of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), 3rd – 8th graders in Rhode Island have seen gains equal to, or greater than, both New Hampshire and Vermont in proficiency rates in all of the assessments excluding writing. In addition, Rhode Island saw the largest gains on the 4th grade NAEP reading assessment between 2007 and 2009 (excluding Washington DC). However, the State continues to underperform vis-a-vis its cohort states on the NECAP and ranks near the bottom among the New England states on national assessments such as the SAT and the NAEP.

There are also significant differences in performance across the State. Although the five urban core districts have seen improvement since the NECAP was first administered in 2005, particularly in the reading assessment where the average proficiency rate increased from 35.3 percent in 2005 to 50 percent in 2009, the average reading proficiency rate in the five districts was 28 percent lower than proficiency rates across the rest of the State in 2009. Similarly, while the average proficiency rate on the math assessment in the urban core districts increased from 28 percent in 2005 to 37 percent in 2009, the remaining 31 districts had an average proficiency rate of 68 percent in 2009.

2. Delivering a quality education at an affordable price

Between FY 1995 and FY 2008 (the most recent year for which actual Rhode Island expenditure data is available), total education expenditures increased 106.7 percent from \$1,034.4 million to \$2,138.1 million. On a per pupil basis, total education expenditures grew from \$7,056 in FY 1995 to \$14,781 in FY 2008, an increase of 109.5 percent. RIPEC projects that total education spending will increase to \$2,621.6 million, or \$20,408 per pupil, by FY 2015. While direct State aid for education increased by \$190.7 million or 34.3 percent over the past decade, RIPEC projects total education expenditures will have increased by \$864.2 million, or 61.2 percent, over the same time period. As a result, the State's share has declined over time, translating into increased local property tax effort to support school spending.

Rhode Island's property tax burden as a share of income is 5th highest in the country – over 40 percent higher than the national average. On average, more than half the property tax bill in Rhode Island goes to support schools, and local communities continue to struggle with finding ways to keep up with continued school spending growth coupled with growing stress on local budgets. Unless changes are made to address three key aspects of school funding – cost control, student need and taxpayer equity – Rhode Island's escalating property tax burdens will have an adverse impact on economic activity and community development.

3. Increasing the number of college- and career-ready Rhode Islanders

The most recent data from the Rhode Island Department of Education shows that 76 percent of students who entered grade 9 in 2004 graduated as a part of the class of 2009, one of the lowest rates in New England. Further, Census data shows that 16.3 percent of the population aged 25 and older has less than a high school diploma, which is more than the national average and all other New England states. The low level of high school completers in the State not only puts Rhode Island at a competitive disadvantage with regard to attracting and maintaining business, it also increases the demand for social services and lowers tax revenues.

Other data indicates that the changing economy requires education beyond a high school diploma. An October 2009 report by The Workforce Alliance and Skills2Compete Rhode Island notes that 42 percent of all job openings by 2016 will require “middle skill” workers – those with more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. At the same time, data from the report, *“Rhode Island's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs”*, indicate that in 2007 approximately 48 percent of jobs in the State were classified as “middle skill”, yet only 37 percent of Rhode Islanders had the education and training to fill the positions. Additional data from RIDE indicates that the State ranks in the lowest quintile nationally for high school graduates enrolling in college.

These challenges are significant, but not insurmountable, and addressing them is the first step towards ensuring Rhode Island's economic sustainability and guaranteeing a high quality of life for all Rhode Islanders. The Department of Education has outlined a set of ambitious goals as part of its application for the “Race to the Top” funds and has pledged to implement the changes regardless of whether it receives the additional funding in the second round of the process. RIPEC believes that the program outlined by RIDE is an essential first step toward creating a quality education system for all Rhode Islanders. However, it is essential that all stakeholders

take a proactive stance and work together to achieve these aims, regardless of whether the State is successful in their bid to be awarded the funds in Phase II of the grant application.

To help accomplish what has been proposed by the Department, RIPEC recommends the following:

1. Continue to develop evidence-based practices to create highly effective schools

As the State works to close the achievement gap between Rhode Island and the region, and between urban and non-urban districts, it is essential that there is a continued focus on determining “what works” in elementary and secondary instruction. While evidence-based practices do not always translate into all educational environments, the State and districts must continue to seek out empirical evidence when making decisions regarding program development and support, curriculum, staffing decisions, and other governance issues.

One of the State’s primary frameworks for education is the Basic Education Plan (BEP) which provides guidance for academic and support programs offered at the local level. Effectively, the document is intended to ensure that a basic educational program will be offered to all students in Rhode Island, regardless of where they reside, and to outline a set of standards that go along with the basic program to measure compliance with the law. The current BEP was revised in March of 1989. Recently, however, the Board of Regents has passed an updated BEP which is set to take effect July 1, 2010.

Given the central role which this document plays in education-related policy, including, but not limited to, responsibilities of local education agencies (LEAs) and RIDE, program support and content, planning, evaluation, and fiscal and academic accountability, there is a need to have an ongoing evaluation process for the document. The Board and Department should work to make sure the guidelines are grounded in evidence-based practices that have been tested – particularly in states that outperform Rhode Island – to ensure the State continues to move in the right direction.

Rhode Island has been active in the process to develop national standards and has consistently been recognized as having high-quality standards. In addition, the revised BEP appears to provide increased guidance on this point. RIPEC believes these are essential first steps toward meeting the department’s goals. At the same time, however, it is imperative that the department and LEAs work together to strengthen the relationship between standards, curriculum and testing goals.

A closer relationship between curriculum and testing goals is also essential for Rhode Island’s success at a national level, and has renewed importance given the increased focus on NECAP performance as a graduation requirement. Starting in 2012, performance on standardized exams will count for a third of students’ graduation requirements (compared to 10 percent under current requirements). All high-school juniors must score at least *partially proficient* on the NECAP, or they will be required to re-take the test to receive a higher score, submit an alternate test score (e.g., the SAT), or pass a district-developed test. This will mean that, without proper support from the schools, many under-achieving students will be at-risk for not graduating.

2. Explore cost-control options

Another key policy action is to establish sufficient cost controls on school spending, helping the State and its taxpayers see much needed property tax relief. The implementation of data systems such as the Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) has helped to ensure greater accountability for resources. However, the State and districts must also implement policies that control the rate of growth in school spending without compromising the reform agenda and progress made to date.

RI is a small state with a number of small or financially challenged districts that may lack the capacity to develop and support the creation of a high-quality curriculum, professional development and data systems. In order to ensure that districts are able to meet the aspects of the Department's strategic plan that relate to the above, efforts should be made to enhance regional collaboratives, such as the East Bay Educational Collaborative, increasing economies of scale in such a way that districts are better able to support these changes. Districts and the State should also work together to enhance and expand opportunities for statewide and regional purchasing collaboratives.

Work has started in many areas of shared services and in the past three budgets the Governor has submitted budget articles that may allow for increased efficiencies such as the statewide school transportation system, a statewide food service program and joint purchasing systems. One area that should be focused on is controlling growth in benefit costs either through a statewide or regional health purchasing system such as the Governmental Health Group of Rhode Island.

Finally, the State should examine opportunities for regulatory relief for districts and communities, for example, revisiting the Caruolo Act in order to determine if modifications to the legislation should be considered. The Governor has proposed articles which, if enacted, will have an effect on the costs of operations for local governments and school districts.

3. Implement an equitable funding formula that provides adequate resources and ensures accountability and allow the formula to work

Rhode Island has lacked an education funding formula since the 1990s and is the only state in the country that has not implemented an educational funding formula. The current fiscal strain at both the local and state level requires a more efficient use of resources while at the same time ensure that there is adequate support to fund the principles of the BEP. As such, the State must address implementing an equitable education funding formula, while requiring greater accountability at the local level to rein in education costs. A successful formula should recognize capacity and need at the district level, while acknowledging the limited fiscal capability of the State at the current time. As such, a transition period is necessary in any funding formula.

RIPEC continues to support the following principles in any funding formula:

- The State should ensure that its school funding structure adequately reflects the educational cost differences of different "high-need" students, and closes the education inequities among the State's school districts;
- The State education funding system must provide a predictable amount and source of funding to ensure stability in the funding of schools;

- The State recognizes that districts of limited fiscal capacity must receive greater State aid than their higher wealth counterparts (a classic wealth equalization model inherent in the majority of school funding formulas);
- The school funding system ought to treat property taxpayers equitably, limit the portion of school budgets financed by property taxes, and establish sufficient cost controls on school spending; and
- A school funding formula should promote school efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

It is also imperative that any formula that is implemented is allowed to work; changes made to any formula should not degrade the integrity or intent of a formula. At the same time, the formula must establish a meaningful mechanism to hold school officials accountable for exceeding approved budgets to maintain integrity in the funding structure at the local level.

Rhode Island has put many tools in place to enhance performance, to monitor progress, and to support leadership in our schools. However, it will be difficult to continue moving this agenda forward if the annual debate over school funding continues without a meaningful framework. It is fundamental to Rhode Island's success that we work towards a school funding system that is more neutral in how it influences program decisions, housing and land use policies, and location decisions of businesses and homeowners.

4. Use data to improve outcomes and to ensure accountability

Over the years, RIDE has invested a significant amount of resources into developing high-quality data systems including In\$ite, the Uniform Chart of Accounts, and the Data Warehouse. These systems have the potential to not only increase accountability, but can be used to devote funding to its most effective use and enhance educational outcomes. However, conclusions drawn from data are only as good as the data itself. As such, accurate and timely reporting of data by districts is fundamental to increasing the effectiveness and affordability of the State's educational system.

Highlights of the report include:

Performance

State to State Comparison

- Rhode Island's SAT verbal and mathematics scores remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2009; however, the State continues to have lower average composite scores compared to the national average and to the rest of the region.
- Over the past ten years, the composite SAT score for Rhode Island test takers has decreased by 7 points. During this time, the gap between Rhode Island and the majority of the New England states has grown as overall regional performance has improved.
- Between 2000 and 2009, the average score on the 4th grade NAEP mathematics assessment increased 15 points while the average 8th grade score increased 9 points; however, Rhode Island's scores continue to be lower than all New England states.
- The mean score in Rhode Island on the NAEP science assessment declined by two points at both the 4th and 8th grade levels between 2000 and 2005. During this time, the State also saw a decline in the percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient*.
- While the mean score on the reading assessment increased by five points between 1998 and 2009 for Rhode Island 4th graders, the mean score for 8th graders has declined four points.
- Since 1998, the average 8th grade writing score in Rhode Island has increased with the national average. The Ocean State ranked 26th in the country on the 2007 assessment

Rhode Island Performance

- Composite scores on the 2009 SAT (excluding the writing portion) ranged from a high of 1,163 in Barrington to a low of 768 in Central Falls. The statewide average was 994.
- Since the NECAP was first administered in the fall of 2005, statewide student performance on the reading assessment in grades 3-8 has steadily increased, from a proficiency rate of 58 percent in 2005 to 70 percent in 2009. Proficiency rates in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont were 69 percent, 77 percent and 72 percent, respectively.
- In 2009, 58 percent of Rhode Island students (in grades 3-8) scored *at or above proficient* on the mathematics assessment, compared to 2005 when just 49 percent of students tested as proficient. Sixty-one percent of students in Maine, 71 percent of students in New Hampshire, and 66 percent of students in Vermont scored proficient on the 2009 exam.
- Across the State, 25 percent of students scored proficient on the science assessment in 2009, compared to 33 percent in New Hampshire and 34 percent in Vermont.
- In the 2008 writing assessment, 53 percent of Rhode Island students (grades 5 and 8) scored *at or above proficient*, an increase of 2 percentage points from the 2005 assessment. Proficiency rates in New Hampshire and Vermont were 55 and 54 percent, respectively.
- In most cases students in grade 11 had equal or higher proficiency rates on the reading assessment when compared to students in grades 3-8 in the 2009 testing year but the State's 11th graders tended to perform worse on the mathematics test than students in grades 3-8.

Demographics

State to State Comparison

- Although there were fewer Rhode Island families living in poverty in 2008 when compared to the national average (11.7 percent v. 13.2 percent), the State had the second-highest percentage of families living in poverty in New England (behind Maine).
- While fewer Rhode Island adults had at least a high school education compared to the national and regional average (83.7 v. 85 percent), the State had a higher percentage of adults with at least a bachelor's degree compared to the national average and Maine (30.0 v. 27.7 and 25.4 percent, respectively).
- In contrast to national trends, every state in New England saw student enrollment decline between the 2002-03 and 2007-08 school years. During this time period, Rhode Island saw student enrollment decline by 7.2 percent, the largest drop in enrollment of the six states.
- Nationally, enrollment in English Language Learner (ELL) programs declined 3.3 percent between 2002-03 and 2007-08. In Rhode Island, ELL enrollments declined by 1.5 percent, while ELL enrollments increased slightly or remained the same in the rest of the region.
- Special education enrollments decreased slightly across the country as a whole and in Rhode Island during this time period; however, in both years special education enrollments in the State were higher than the national average and other New England states.
- In the 2007-08 school year, free/reduced lunch (FRL) students accounted for a larger share of total student enrollment nationally, and across New England compared to the 2002-03 school year; however FRL enrollments in all six states was below the national average.

Rhode Island District Comparison

- Between the 2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, public school enrollment in Rhode Island fell from 151,672 students to 140,960 students, a 7.1 percent decrease. Of the State's 36 districts, Barrington was the only one to see an increase in population during this time.
- Over the past five years, statewide ELL enrollment has declined by 41 students, or 0.6 percent. At the same time, due to declines in total enrollment, ELL students constitute a slightly larger share of total statewide enrollment in the 2009-10 school year.
- Students with an individualized education plan (IEP; special education students) accounted for 18.2 percent of total enrollment in the 2009-10 school year, compared to 20.3 percent in the 2004-05 school year. The majority of students with an IEP are in one of the State's ten urban districts; however, urban IEP enrollments as a share of student population are only slightly higher than across the rest of the State.
- The percentage of students enrolled in the FRL program has increased over the past five years. In 2004-05, there were 52,700 students enrolled in the program, compared to 58,880 in 2009-10, an increase of 11.7 percent.
- Although the ten urban core districts account for roughly 55 percent of total 2009-10 enrollment in the State, 78.9 percent of students in the FRL program attend school in one of the districts.

Revenues

State to State Comparison

- In FY 2007, local resources supported 43.9 percent of education funding nationwide while state resources accounted for 47.6 percent of education revenues. Since FY 1997, both the local and state portion of education funding have declined slightly as Federal resources have increased.
- In general, New England relies more on local sources to fund education than the rest of the country. In both FY 1997 and FY 2007, all of the states in the region (with the exception of Vermont) were above the national average for local support and were lower than the national average for state support.
- Rhode Island ranked 12th highest in the country for the share of education revenues supported by local sources in FY 2007. Although the share of local support has declined since FY 1997, the State rose in the national rankings (from 14th highest).
- The State share of education revenues in Rhode Island was approximately 40 percent in both FY 1997 and FY 2007; the State ranked 40th in 2007.

Rhode Island District Comparison

- Between FY 2000 and FY 2008, total education revenues in Rhode Island increased from \$1,333.4 million to \$1,989.5 million, or by 49.2 percent. Local sources accounted for 61.0 percent of the growth during this time.
- The second-largest share of growth was in state sources (excluding direct charter school aid, construction aid and the State contribution for teacher retirement), which increased \$179.7 million to \$694.9 million in FY 2008; however the state share of total revenues declined 3.7 percent, from 38.6 percent to 34.9 percent of total education resources.
- In FY 2008, local revenues accounted for 58 cents of every dollar dedicated to education statewide, State sources accounted for 35 cents of every education dollar and federal support was 7 cents of every dollar.
- The mix of revenues used to support education varies depending, in part, on local capacity and need. In general, the urban core districts receive more support from the State and Federal governments than the rest of State. On average, local revenues account for 29.8 percent of urban core revenues, compared to 71.1 percent across the rest of the State.
- Similarly, state sources account for a smaller portion of funding in the non-urban districts, ranging from 58.3 percent of education revenues in the urban core to 18.9 percent of revenues in the suburban districts.
- When Central Falls and New Shoreham are excluded, local support was the lowest in Woonsocket (19.7 percent of total revenues and the highest in Jamestown (92.8 percent of total revenues).
- Between FY 2000 and the FY 2010 Enacted Budget, state aid increased by \$114.6 million, or 22.2 percent. On a per pupil basis, state aid increased by \$1,151 per pupil, or by 34.7 percent during this time.

Expenditures

State to State Comparison

- Base on data for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Rhode Island ranked 5th highest in the country for per pupil spending with expenditures of \$13,453 in FY 2007, the most recent year for which data is available. Nationally, FY 2007 per pupil expenditures were \$9,703.
- When education expenditures were measured as a share of personal income, Rhode Island's expenditures of \$49.57 per \$1,000 of personal income were 9th highest in the country in 2007 and were 17.6 percent higher than the national average of \$42.16.
- Together, salaries and benefits accounted for 82.5 percent of all education expenditures in FY 2007, compared to 80.4 percent nationally. Although salaries as a part of total expenditures were less in the Ocean State compared to the rest of the country, benefit costs accounted for 4.3 percent more of education budgets in Rhode Island than in the nation as a whole.
- In both FY 1997 and FY 2007, Rhode Island's instructional staff salaries and benefits per pupil were approximately 40 percent higher than the national average but were in line with most other New England states.

Rhode Island District Comparison

- Based on RIPEC projections, total education expenditures in Rhode Island are projected to increase to \$2.6 billion by FY 2015, an increase of approximately 86 percent since FY 2000.
- Per pupil education expenditures are expected to increase to \$20,408 in FY 2015, reflecting growth of roughly 125 percent since FY 2000, when per pupil education expenditures totaled \$9,086.
- Total education expenditures are anticipated to increase from \$1,411.6 million in FY 2000 to \$2,275.8 million in FY 2010, an increase of 61.2 percent. The largest portion of this increase is for general education expenditures, which are projected to grow by \$540.0 million, or 62.5 percent of the total growth in spending over the eight-year time period.
- Special education expenditures are projected to increase 89.9 percent, from \$266.3 million in FY 2000 to \$505.7 million in FY 2010, accounting for 27.7 percent of total growth during the ten-year time frame.
- Expenditures for students in ELL programs in FY 2010 are projected to increase by \$2.2 million, or 7.2 percent, over FY 2000 spending. Total projected FY 2010 ELL spending is \$33.1 million.
- On a per pupil basis, total FY 2010 expenditures are projected to be \$15,514, compared to FY 2000 per pupil expenditures of \$9,086.
- During this time period, per pupil special education expenditures are projected to increase by 119.3 percent to \$19,023 per pupil while ELL-related spending per pupil is projected to increase 64.4 percent to \$4,971 per pupil.

Student Performance

Highlights

State to State Comparison

- Rhode Island's SAT verbal and mathematics scores remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2009; however, the State continues to have lower average composite scores compared to the national average and to the rest of the region.
- Over the past ten years, the composite SAT score for Rhode Island test takers has decreased by 7 points. During this time, the gap between Rhode Island and the majority of the New England states has grown as overall regional performance has improved.
- Between 2000 and 2009, the average score on the 4th grade NAEP mathematics assessment increased 15 points while the average 8th grade score increased 9 points; however, Rhode Island's scores continue to be lower than all New England states.
- The mean score in Rhode Island on the NAEP science assessment declined by two points at both the 4th and 8th grade levels between 2000 and 2005. During this time, the State also saw a decline in the percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient*.
- While the mean score on the reading assessment increased by five points between 1998 and 2009 for Rhode Island 4th graders, the mean score for 8th graders has declined four points.
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- Across the State, 25 percent of students scored proficient on the science assessment in 2009, compared to 33 percent in New Hampshire and 34 percent in Vermont.
- In the 2008 writing assessment, 53 percent of Rhode Island students (grades 5 and 8) scored *at or above proficient*, an increase of 2 percentage points from the 2005 assessment. Proficiency rates in New Hampshire and Vermont were 55 and 54 percent, respectively.
- In most cases students in grade 11 had equal or higher proficiency rates on the reading assessment when compared to students in grades 3-8 in the 2009 testing year but the State's 11th graders tended to perform worse on the mathematics test than students in grades 3-8.

Overview

Historically, Rhode Island has devoted a significant amount of resources to education. Given the high level of public resources committed to schools, it is important to assess the performance of the State's elementary and secondary institutions. Student progress can be measured against a number of yardsticks and with a number of different assessments. Standardized test scores are considered useful in examining students' qualifications and preparation for educational and economic success and are typically the only consistent and objective benchmark of student performance.

It is important to consider multiple sources and assessments before drawing conclusions about student progress. Each standardized exam has inherent strengths and limitations and should be considered in conjunction with performance on other tests, district and state capabilities, and student demographics. Additionally, when analyzing student and school district assessment results, one should keep in mind that there are various factors that can influence performance. For example, states or districts with a high proportion of students eligible for free-reduced lunches tend to have lower average test scores than states with a lower proportion of their students eligible for these programs. In order to put the results found in this section into a broader picture of education in the Ocean State, subsequent sections of this report examine a number of factors that impact student performance and the provision of education.

The following section of this report considers three different measures of student performance at both a national and state level. This provides context on how the State performs internally and in comparison to neighboring states and the national average. National data in this section comes from The College Board and the National Center for Education Statistics. Rhode Island State data comes from the Rhode Island Department of Education. All exam results represent the most recent data available as of publication.

The following section on assessment and accountability provides an update on the federal No Child Left Behind Act, including an overview of the Act and how Rhode Island has implemented the legislation. In addition, the assessment and accountability section examines how successful Rhode Island has been in meeting the requirements of the Act at both a district and school level.

The three standardized assessments covered in this report are:

- The *Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)* – a self-selected college admissions test administered throughout the country, with results available at the state and district level;
- The *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* – the only national metric that allows cross-comparisons of student performance in reading, math, writing and science; and
- The *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)* – Rhode Island's assessment tool, which replaced the New Standards Reference Exam (NSRE) in 2005, developed jointly with New Hampshire and Vermont to meet the standards of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

State-to-State Comparison

The following analysis compares Rhode Island student performance with the five other New England states and the national average on both the SAT and the NAEP. Data come from the College Board, which administers the SAT, and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), which administers the NAEP. All results are from the most recent testing year.

The Scholastic Assessment Test

The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) is a voluntary college entrance exam primarily taken by high school seniors. SAT scores can provide an objective evaluation of individual applicant's verbal and math scores and are thus an important part of the application process for many colleges and universities. This analysis excludes the writing assessment portion of the SAT exam since such scores have only been available for three years.

The College Board, which administers the test, discourages comparisons between states on SAT scores alone, as participation rates vary drastically between states and scores will vary with participation rates. States that have a higher participation rate will tend to see lower average test scores. One notable example is Maine, which required all graduating seniors to take the SAT beginning in 2007, resulting in a significant decline in mean test scores compared to prior years.

It is also important to note that the SAT is primarily a self-selected test. Often, states with low participation rates have a testing population composed of college-bound seniors with strong academic backgrounds who tend to perform well on the test. In states where a greater proportion of students with a wide range of academic backgrounds take the SAT, and where most colleges in the state require the test for admission, the scores are closer to the national average. Therefore, aggregate results of test performance do not reflect the educational attainment of all students in a school, district or state.

With the above caveats in mind, aggregate SAT scores can provide a benchmark measurement between states with similar participation rates. While the national participation rate was 45 percent, participation rates in New England ranged from 64 percent in Vermont to 90 percent in Maine (Table 2). Rhode Island's participation rate was the second lowest among the New England states, at 66 percent.

Rhode Island's verbal and mathematics scores remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2009, increasing three points to 498 in verbal while decreasing two points to 496 in math. Test takers in Rhode Island continue to have a lower average composite score than their peers, both nationally, and in comparison to the neighboring states (with the exception of Maine).

Rhode Island's average composite score of 994 was 22 points below the national average and over 50 points below New Hampshire, the top-performing New England state. Connecticut's mean composite score was 28 points higher than Rhode Island's, Vermont's composite score of 1,036 was 42 points higher, and the mean total score in Massachusetts was 46 points higher.

Table 2
SAT Verbal and Math Scores

| State | Part. Rate | 2009 Mean Raw Scores | | | 1-year change (from 2008) | | | 5-year change (from 2004) | | | 10-year change (from 1999) | | |
|---------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|------------|---------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total |
| U.S. Average | 46% | 501 | 515 | 1,016 | -1 | 0 | -1 | -7 | -3 | -10 | -4 | 4 | 0 |
| Connecticut | 83% | 509 | 513 | 1,022 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -6 | -2 | -8 | -1 | 4 | 3 |
| Maine | 90% | 468 | 467 | 935 | -1 | 1 | 0 | -37 | -34 | -71 | -39 | -36 | -75 |
| Massachusetts | 84% | 514 | 526 | 1,040 | 0 | 1 | 1 | -4 | 3 | -1 | 3 | 15 | 18 |
| New Hampshire | 75% | 523 | 523 | 1,046 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Rhode Island | 66% | 498 | 496 | 994 | 3 | -2 | 1 | -5 | -6 | -11 | -4 | -3 | -7 |
| Vermont | 64% | 518 | 518 | 1,036 | -1 | -5 | -6 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 12 | 16 |

Note: SAT scores are for all schools (public, private and religious).

Source: The College Board, "College-Bound Seniors: 2008 Profile of SAT Program Test Takers", and RIPEC calculations

Over the past ten years, the composite score for Rhode Island test takers has decreased by 7 points (Table 2). During this time, the gap between Rhode Island and the majority of the New England states (excluding Maine), has grown as overall regional performance has improved. Given that all states in New England, aside from Vermont, had higher participation rates than the Ocean State, it is unlikely that participation rates played a significant role in these results.

A major component of this gap is Rhode Island's relatively low math score when compared to the national average and other New England states. Between 1999 and 2009, the mean math score in Rhode Island has decreased three points, from 499 to 496. The national mean score, however, has increased four points since 1999 and is 19 points higher than the mean math score in Rhode Island. The average scores in most of the New England states continue to be competitive with, or higher than, the national average. Rhode Island is the only New England state (excluding Maine) to see a decrease in mathematics scores over the past ten years.

Rhode Island's gap on the verbal section of the SAT is not as large as the math score gap. However, as with math, the Ocean State continues to under-perform when compared to its neighbors and to the national average. In 2009, the national average mean verbal score was 501, compared to an average verbal score of 498 in Rhode Island. Mean 2009 verbal scores in Rhode Island, across the country and across the region were, for the most part, lower when compared to 1999 and 2004 scores, and remained relatively flat between 2007 and 2008.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as *The Nation's Report Card*, is a national, periodic assessment of student performance across a range of topics and is the only national metric available for cross-state comparisons of student performance. As of 2001, states are required to test 4th and 8th graders every two years as a means to verify the adequacy of state tests used for the assessment provisions of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. For a more detailed description of the exam, please consult the Glossary at the end of the report.

The NAEP does not provide results for individual students or schools. Instead, results are expressed in terms of the percentage of students who attained different levels of proficiency for populations of students (e.g., 4th graders) and groups within those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). Proficiency results are reflected in three categories:

- *Basic* – denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade;
- *Proficient* – represents solid academic performance, demonstrating competency over challenging subject matter, application of such knowledge, and appropriate analytical skills; and
- *Advanced* – represents superior performance.

The results that follow are based on representative samples that include students with disabilities and limited English proficiency. In assessments prior to 1998 (for reading) and 2000 (for math), testing adaptations were not available for special-needs students. In order to provide comparable data, the following analysis examines test results starting the year in which accommodations were permitted.

The most recent NAEP tests were conducted in 2009, at which time performance in reading mathematics and science was assessed for grades four and eight in all states. This year's report includes the most recent results for both the science and writing assessments, which were released in 2005 and 2007, respectively. The 2009 science assessment results will be released in spring, 2010, and the next writing assessment will be administered in 2011.

Mathematics – 4th Grade

Rhode Island 4th graders have demonstrated consistent improvement in their math scores. Between 2000 and 2009, the average score increased 15 points to 239, which is the national average score. However, Rhode Island's score continues to be statistically significantly lower than all New England states. Massachusetts continues to lead the region in 4th grade math performance with a mean score of 252. Nationally, 30 states had statistically significantly higher scores than Rhode Island in 2009.

While 39 percent of Rhode Island 4th graders scored *at or above proficient* in 2009, it was the lowest rate of the New England states. The number of Rhode Island students achieving the rank of *at or above proficient* represents an improvement of 17 percentage points since 2000; however, the percent of Rhode Island students in this category trailed neighboring states in all years covered. Notably, although 4th graders in Maine and Rhode Island had similar levels of math proficiency in 2000 (23 percent and 22 percent, respectively), Maine now has proficiency rates of 45 percent, six percentage points higher than Rhode Island. At the same time, 2009 represented the first year when more Rhode Island 4th graders scored *at or above proficient* than across the nation as a whole.

Similarly, there is a gap between Rhode Island and its neighboring states with regard to the percent of 4th graders scoring *below basic* in 2009. One should note that Rhode Island made progress in reducing the number of students scoring *below basic*, from 35 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2007. In 2009 thirty-two percent of Rhode Island 4th graders scored *below basic*, well above the national rate of 19 percent, in 2009. Compared to the Ocean State, just 14 percent of

4th graders in Connecticut, 22 percent in Maine, 19 percent in Vermont, and eight percent in New Hampshire and Massachusetts scored *below basic* on the assessment.

Table 3
NAEP Mathematics Assessment

| Grade 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| State | Score | | | | Percentage | | | | | | | | |
| | 2000 | 2007 | 2009 | Change 00-09 | 2000 | | | 2007 | | | 2009 | | |
| | | | | | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 224 | 239* | 239 | 15 | 36% | 64% | 22% | 19% | 81% | 38% | 19% | 81% | 38% |
| Connecticut | 234* | 243* | 245* | 11 | 24% | 76% | 31% | 16% | 84% | 44% | 14% | 86% | 46% |
| Maine | 230* | 242* | 244* | 14 | 27% | 73% | 23% | 15% | 85% | 42% | 22% | 78% | 45% |
| Massachusetts | 233* | 252* | 252* | 19 | 23% | 77% | 31% | 7% | 93% | 58% | 8% | 92% | 57% |
| New Hampshire | N/A | 249* | 251* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 9% | 91% | 52% | 8% | 92.0% | 56% |
| Rhode Island | 224 | 236 | 239 | 15 | 35% | 65% | 22% | 20% | 80% | 34% | 32% | 68% | 39% |
| Vermont | 232* | 246* | 248* | 16 | 27% | 73% | 29% | 11% | 89% | 49% | 19% | 81% | 51% |

| Grade 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| State | Score | | | | Percentage | | | | | | | | |
| | 2000 | 2007 | 2009 | Change 00-09 | 2000 | | | 2007 | | | 2009 | | |
| | | | | | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 272 | 280* | 282* | 10 | 38% | 62% | 25% | 30% | 70% | 31% | 29% | 71% | 33% |
| Connecticut | 281* | 282* | 289* | 8 | 30% | 70% | 33% | 27% | 73% | 34% | 22% | 78% | 40% |
| Maine | 281* | 286* | 286* | 5 | 27% | 73% | 30% | 22% | 78% | 34% | 22% | 78% | 35% |
| Massachusetts | 279* | 298* | 299* | 20 | 30% | 70% | 30% | 15% | 85% | 51% | 15% | 85% | 52% |
| New Hampshire | N/A | 288* | 292* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 22% | 78% | 38% | 22% | 82% | 43% |
| Rhode Island | 269 | 275 | 278 | 9 | 41% | 59% | 22% | 35% | 65% | 28% | 32% | 68% | 28% |
| Vermont | 281* | 291* | 293* | 12 | 27% | 73% | 31% | 19% | 81% | 41% | 18% | 81% | 43% |

* Represents a score that is statistically significantly higher than Rhode Island (significant at the 0.05 level).
Source: National Center for Education Statistics - The Nation's Report Card - Mathematics; RIPEC calculations

Mathematics – Eighth Grade

As with 4th grade math, Rhode Island 8th graders tend to have comparatively lower proficiency levels on the NAEP mathematics assessment. All New England states had mean raw scores that were statistically significantly higher than Rhode Island. In 2009, the average score in Rhode Island was 278, an increase of 9 points since 2000. The national average was 282, an increase of 10 points. Massachusetts had the highest mean score in New England (299 points), while Rhode Island scored the lowest. Nationally, 13 states had scores statistically significantly lower than Rhode Island in 2009 on the assessment.

The gap between Rhode Island and its neighboring states is also apparent when comparing the percent of students who scored *at or above proficient* and the percent of students who were *below basic*. In 2009, just 28 percent of Rhode Island 8th graders scored *at or above proficiency* in mathematics. While this represents an increase of six percentage points since 2000, the State still trails the national average (33 percent) and all the New England states by at least seven percent. Of students in the *at or above proficient* level in 8th grade mathematics, Massachusetts ranked 1st, Vermont 5th, New Hampshire 6th, Maine ranked 24th while Rhode Island ranked 37th nationally. Unlike the 4th grade scores, fewer Rhode Island 8th graders tested *at or above proficient* than the national average.

**Table 4
NAEP Science Assessment**

| Grade 4 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| State | Score | | | Percentage | | | | | |
| | 2000 | 2005 | Change 00-05 | Below Basic | 2000 At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | 2005 At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 145 | 149* | 4 | 39% | 61% | 26% | 34% | 66% | 27% |
| Connecticut | 156* | 155* | -1 | 25% | 75% | 35% | 28% | 72% | 33% |
| Maine | 161* | 160* | -1 | 18% | 82% | 37% | 19% | 81% | 36% |
| Massachusetts | 161* | 160* | -1 | 19% | 81% | 42% | 21% | 79% | 38% |
| New Hampshire | N/A | 161* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 17% | 83% | 37% |
| Rhode Island | 148 | 146 | -2 | 35% | 65% | 25% | 37% | 63% | 23% |
| Vermont | 160* | 160* | 0 | 21% | 79% | 38% | 22% | 78% | 38% |

| Grade 8 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| State | Score | | | Percentage | | | | | |
| | 2000 | 2005 | Change 00-05 | Below Basic | 2000 At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | 2005 At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 148 | 147 | -1 | 43% | 57% | 29% | 27% | 57% | 27% |
| Connecticut | 153* | 152* | -1 | 36% | 64% | 36% | 37% | 63% | 35% |
| Maine | 158* | 158* | 0 | 28% | 72% | 35% | 28% | 72% | 34% |
| Massachusetts | 158* | 161* | 3 | 30% | 70% | 39% | 28% | 72% | 41% |
| New Hampshire | N/A | 162* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 24% | 76% | 41% |
| Rhode Island | 148 | 146 | -2 | 42% | 58% | 27% | 42% | 58% | 26% |
| Vermont | 159* | 162* | 3 | 29% | 71% | 39% | 24% | 76% | 41% |

* Represents a score that is statistically significantly higher than Rhode Island (significant at the 0.05 level).
Source: National Center for Education Statistics - The Nation's Report Card - Science; RIPEC calculations

NAEP Science – 4th Grade

Rhode Island’s 2005 composite score of 146 represents a two point decrease from the previous testing year (2000). The State’s score was three points below the national average and was the lowest in New England. Four of the five other New England states ranked in the top ten states nationally, with New Hampshire’s score of 161 ranking the state highest in the country. In a national comparison, only eight states had a mean score that was statistically lower than the Ocean State.

Another measure of student performance is the percentage of students in each proficiency category. The percent of Rhode Island 4th graders who scored *at or above proficient* on the NAEP science assessment was 23 percent in 2005. This is four percent below the national average and the lowest of all New England states. All New England states, except for Rhode Island, rank above the national average in the *at or above proficient* category. Between 2000 and 2005 Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island saw a decrease in the number of students scoring *at or above proficient*, while Vermont’s ranking was constant.

NAEP Science – 8th Grade

As with 4th grade science, Rhode Island 8th graders have had relatively low proficiency levels on the NAEP science assessment. In 2005, the average score in Rhode Island was 146, a decrease of two points since 2000. The national average also decreased one point to 147 in 2005. Vermont and New Hampshire had the highest mean scores in New England (162 points), while Rhode Island had the lowest. Nationally, 16 states had a statistically significantly lower score

than Rhode Island on the 2005 assessment while all New England states had statistically significantly higher scores.

In 2005, 26 percent of Rhode Island 8th graders scored *at or above proficient* on the science assessment. This represents a decrease of one percentage points since 2000. The State also trails the nation and its neighboring states; nationally 27 percent of 8th graders achieved scores that were *at or above proficient* and all other New England states had proficiency rates higher than the national average. Nationally, Rhode Island ranked 26th in the percent of students scoring *at or above proficient*, while Vermont ranked 4th, Massachusetts ranked 5th, New Hampshire ranked 6th, Maine ranked 15th and Connecticut ranked 19th. Rhode Island also continues to have a significantly higher percentage of students that scored *below basic* on the 8th grade science assessment (42 percent) compared to the national average (27 percent).

**Table 5
NAEP Writing Assessment**

| State | Score | | | | Grade 8 | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| | 1998 | 2002 | 2007 | Change 98-07 | 1998 | | | 2002 | | | 2007 | | |
| | | | | | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 148 | 152 | 154 | 6 | 17% | 83% | 24% | 16% | 84% | 30% | 13% | 87% | 31% |
| Connecticut | 165* | 164* | 172* | 7 | 9% | 91% | 44% | 13% | 87% | 45% | 8% | 92% | 53% |
| Maine | 155* | 157* | 161* | 6 | 13% | 87% | 32% | 14% | 86% | 36% | 10% | 90% | 38% |
| Massachusetts | 155* | 163* | 167* | 12 | 13% | 87% | 31% | 10% | 90% | 42% | 7% | 93% | 46% |
| New Hampshire | N/A | N/A | 160* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 10% | 90% | 39% |
| Rhode Island | 148 | 151 | 154 | 6 | 17% | 83% | 25% | 16% | 84% | 29% | 15% | 85% | 32% |
| Vermont | N/A | 163* | 162* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 11% | 89% | 41% | 11% | 89% | 41% |

* Represents a score that is statistically significantly higher than Rhode Island (significant at the 0.05 level).
NOTE: The writing assessment was only administered in 2002 for grade 4
Source: National Center for Education Statistics - The Nation's Report Card - Mathematics; RIPEC calculations

NAEP Writing – 8th Grade

Since 1998, writing assessment scores for eight graders in Rhode Island have increased six points from 148 to 154, consistent with the national average. All New England states saw improvements in their average scores between 1998 and 2007. Massachusetts had the largest gains, from 155 to 167. Neither New Hampshire nor Vermont reported scores in 1998. All New England states, with the exception of the Ocean State, ranked in the top ten nationally in 2007; Connecticut ranked 2nd, Massachusetts 3rd, Vermont 4th, Maine 5th and New Hampshire 7th.

Between 1998 and 2007, the percentage of Rhode Island 8th graders scoring *at or above proficient* increased from 25 percent to 32 percent, while the percent scoring below basic decreased from 17 percent to 15 percent. While Rhode Island was similar to the national average in all years, it continues to under-perform in comparison to other New England states. The percent of Rhode Island 8th graders who were *at or above proficient* in writing was six percentage points lower than Maine and seven percentage points lower than New Hampshire, the next lowest-performing New England states, and was 21 percentage points lower than Connecticut in 2007.

NAEP Reading – 4th Grade

Scale scores on the NAEP fourth grade reading assessment increased by five points in Rhode Island between 1998 and 2009. This was the largest score increase in the New England states, but slightly lower than the national increase of seven points. The State’s 2009 scale score of 223 was the lowest among the states in the region, and statistically significantly lower than all New England states except for Maine but was statistically significantly higher than the national average scale score of 220. Massachusetts ranked highest in the country, followed by New Hampshire (3rd), Connecticut (4th), Vermont (5th), and Maine (19th). Rhode Island ranked 22nd highest in the country in 2009.

In 2009, 36 percent of Rhode Island 4th graders scored *at or above proficient* which was higher than the national average of 33 percent. This is a five percentage point increase from 1998 when 31 percent of Rhode Island 4th graders were considered *at or above proficient*. Similarly, the percent of students in grade 4 who score *below basic* in Rhode Island declined five percentage points, from 36 percent to 31 percent between 1998 and 2009. With the exception of Maine, all other New England states had a higher percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient* than Rhode Island. In Massachusetts, 47 of 4th graders achieved proficiency on the exam, the highest proficiency rate in the region.

Table 6
NAEP Reading Assessment

| Grade 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| State | <u>Score</u> | | | | <u>Percentage</u> | | | | | | | | |
| | 1998 | 2007 | 2009 | Change 98-09 | 1998 | | | 2007 | | | 2009 | | |
| | | | | | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 213 [^] | 220 | 220 [^] | 7 | 42% | 58% | 28% | 34% | 66% | 31% | 33% | 67% | 33% |
| Connecticut | 230* | 227* | 229* | -1 | 24% | 76% | 43% | 27% | 73% | 41% | 24% | 76% | 42% |
| Maine | 225* | 226* | 224 | -1 | 28% | 72% | 25% | 27% | 73% | 36% | 30% | 70% | 35% |
| Massachusetts | 223* | 236* | 234* | 1 | 30% | 70% | 35% | 19% | 81% | 49% | 20% | 80% | 47% |
| New Hampshire | 226* | 229* | 229* | 3 | 26% | 74% | 37% | 24% | 76% | 41% | 23% | 77% | 41% |
| Rhode Island | 218 | 219 | 223 | 5 | 36% | 64% | 31% | 35% | 65% | 31% | 31% | 69% | 36% |
| Vermont | N/A | 228* | 229* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 26% | 74% | 41% | 25% | 75% | 41% |

| Grade 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| State | <u>Score</u> | | | | <u>Percentage</u> | | | | | | | | |
| | 1998 | 2007 | 2009 | Change 98-09 | 1998 | | | 2007 | | | 2009 | | |
| | | | | | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient | Below Basic | At or Above Basic | At or Above Proficient |
| United States | 261 [^] | 261* | 262* | 1 | 29% | 71% | 30% | 27% | 73% | 29% | 25% | 75% | 32% |
| Connecticut | 270* | 267* | 272* | 2 | 19% | 81% | 40% | 23% | 77% | 38% | 19% | 81% | 43% |
| Maine | 271* | 270* | 268* | -3 | 17% | 83% | 41% | 17% | 83% | 37% | 20% | 80% | 35% |
| Massachusetts | 269* | 273* | 274* | 5 | 21% | 79% | 38% | 16% | 84% | 43% | 17% | 83% | 43% |
| New Hampshire | N/A | 270* | 271* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 18% | 82% | 37% | 19% | 81% | 39% |
| Rhode Island | 264 | 258 | 260 | -4 | 24% | 76% | 32% | 31% | 69% | 27% | 28% | 72% | 28% |
| Vermont | N/A | 273* | 272* | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 16% | 84% | 42% | 16% | 84% | 41% |

* Represents a score that is statistically significantly higher than Rhode Island (significant at the 0.05 level).
[^] Represents a score that is statistically significantly lower than Rhode Island (significant at the 0.05 level).
 Source: National Center for Education Statistics - The Nation's Report Card - Reading: RIPEC calculations

Reading – 8th Grade

Rhode Island’s 2009 scale score on the 8th grade reading assessment of 260 was statistically significantly lower than the national average and all other states in the New England region. By contrast, Rhode Island 8th graders scored statistically significantly higher than the national

average in 1998. Over the 11-year time span, 8th grade scale scores in the Ocean State have fallen four points, from 264 to 206, while the national average increased one point, from 261 to 262. As with the 4th grade results, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont all ranked in the top ten states in the country. Rhode Island's mean scale score ranked the State 37th in the country.

In the 2009 assessment, 28 percent of Rhode Island 8th grade students tested *at or above proficient*, compared to 32 percent nationally. In the region, 43 percent of 8th graders scored *at or above proficient* in Connecticut and Massachusetts, while in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, 35, 39 and 41 percent of 8th graders, respectively, scored at least proficient on the test. Since 1998, the percent of 8th graders in Rhode Island scoring *at or above proficient* on the assessment has declined (from 32 percent to 28 percent) while the percent of students in grade 8 scoring *below basic* has increased from 24 percent to 28 percent.

Rhode Island District Performance

In order to provide information on individual district performance, this section examines how Rhode Island districts perform in relation to one another. Statewide NECAP scores for both New Hampshire and Vermont – the states which jointly developed the assessment – are included to provide additional context. Maine is included on the mathematics, writing and reading assessments starting this year.

Scholastic Assessment Test

The following table shows average SAT scores by district for public school students only. It should be noted that the State scores presented here will vary from those presented earlier, which include scores for students at private and religious institutions. In addition, it is important to remember that the SAT is a self-selected test and that results do not necessarily represent the population at large. Further, as mentioned earlier, participation rates may have an impact on test results; states and districts with higher participation rates will often see lower scores.

Rhode Island's average combined SAT score for public school students in 2009 was 973 while the national average was 1,016. As noted earlier, a significant portion of this gap is due to the State's weaker performance on the math component of the exam. The average math score for Rhode Island public school students was 487, 28 points lower than the national average, while the average verbal score in Rhode Island was 486, 15 points lower than the national average.

The statewide average composite score in 2009 represents a two point increase from 2008, a seventeen point decline from 2004 (990), and a twenty-three point decline from 1998 (996). Composite scores (excluding the writing portion) ranged from a high of 1,163 in Barrington to a low of 768 in Central Falls. Scituate had the most significant change in public school SAT performance between 2008 and 2009 scoring fifteen points higher on the verbal section and twenty-five points higher in the math section.

East Providence saw the largest gain among the urban communities, scoring fourteen points higher in mathematics and seventeen points higher in the verbal section, which was the 3rd

highest growth in the State between 2008 and 2009. After experiencing the some of the largest performance declines over the ten-year period, Newport saw a sixteen point increase in their average composite score between 2008 and 2009, the 7th highest growth in the State. Other urban communities that saw improvements in their average composite scores between 2008 and 2009 were North Providence and Warwick.

Table 7
1999 - 2009 Rhode Island Scholastic Assessment Public School Test Scores by School District

| School District | 2009 Results | | | 1-Year Change (from 2008) | | | 5-Year Change (from 2004) | | | 10-Year Change (from 1999) | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 385 | 383 | 768 | -9 | -7 | -16 | -14 | -24 | -38 | -52 | -46 | -98 |
| Newport | 459 | 485 | 944 | -2 | 18 | 16 | -38 | -11 | -49 | -67 | -31 | -98 |
| Pawtucket | 427 | 434 | 861 | -1 | -19 | -21 | -10 | -22 | -32 | -39 | -26 | -66 |
| Providence | 402 | 397 | 799 | -4 | -1 | -5 | -13 | -13 | -26 | -8 | -19 | -26 |
| Woonsocket | 458 | 452 | 910 | -9 | -13 | -22 | 2 | -21 | -19 | -18 | -21 | -39 |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 492 | 497 | 989 | -1 | -4 | -5 | -17 | -16 | -33 | -10 | 0 | -9 |
| East Providence | 480 | 476 | 956 | 17 | 14 | 31 | 5 | -4 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 20 |
| North Providence | 488 | 490 | 978 | 9 | 1 | 10 | -2 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 14 | 16 |
| Warwick | 497 | 494 | 991 | 7 | 2 | 8 | -6 | -6 | -12 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| West Warwick | 475 | 476 | 951 | -19 | -12 | -32 | -24 | -2 | -26 | -17 | 11 | -6 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 569 | 594 | 1,163 | 13 | 3 | 16 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 19 | 40 | 59 |
| Bristol-Warren | 485 | 495 | 980 | 11 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 19 | 22 | -1 | 21 | 20 |
| Cumberland | 523 | 517 | 1,040 | 23 | 0 | 23 | 4 | -17 | -13 | -5 | -21 | -26 |
| East Greenwich | 563 | 580 | 1,143 | -7 | 5 | -2 | 5 | 22 | 27 | 5 | 16 | 21 |
| Johnston | 470 | 450 | 920 | -3 | -24 | -27 | -27 | -36 | -63 | -2 | -8 | -10 |
| Lincoln | 533 | 525 | 1,058 | 17 | -2 | 15 | -1 | -28 | -29 | 6 | -2 | 4 |
| Middletown | 513 | 508 | 1,021 | 10 | -19 | -10 | -7 | 2 | -5 | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| Narragansett | 512 | 533 | 1,045 | -9 | 1 | -8 | 0 | 2 | 2 | -30 | 14 | -16 |
| North Kingstown | 533 | 538 | 1,071 | -2 | 0 | -2 | 9 | 11 | 20 | -3 | 14 | 10 |
| Portsmouth | 521 | 538 | 1,059 | 8 | 25 | 34 | -27 | -8 | -35 | -31 | -7 | -38 |
| Smithfield | 512 | 516 | 1,028 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 16 | 10 | 26 | 27 | 30 | 56 |
| Westerly | 507 | 504 | 1,011 | 9 | 7 | 16 | -1 | -1 | -2 | 20 | 21 | 41 |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 491 | 512 | 1,003 | 5 | -4 | 1 | 11 | 28 | 39 | -8 | 4 | -4 |
| Chariho | 520 | 516 | 1,036 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 7 | -20 | -13 | -1 | -12 | -13 |
| Coventry | 493 | 498 | 991 | 11 | 4 | 15 | -1 | -6 | -7 | -3 | 7 | 4 |
| Exeter-West Greenwich | 528 | 521 | 1,049 | 10 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 15 | 19 | 14 | 21 | 35 |
| Foster-Glocester | 496 | 480 | 976 | 13 | 2 | 15 | -24 | -36 | -60 | -12 | -20 | -32 |
| North Smithfield | 539 | 539 | 1,078 | -11 | -13 | -24 | 30 | 27 | 57 | 27 | 18 | 46 |
| Scituate | 511 | 506 | 1,017 | 15 | 25 | 40 | -3 | -7 | -10 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| South Kingstown | 534 | 548 | 1,082 | -1 | -13 | -14 | -5 | 4 | -1 | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| Tiverton | 497 | 490 | 987 | 8 | -2 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 20 | 23 |
| State Average | 486 | 487 | 973 | 3 | -1 | 2 | -8 | -9 | -17 | -15 | -8 | -23 |
| United States Average | 501 | 515 | 1,016 | 3 | 6 | 9 | -7 | -3 | -10 | -4 | 4 | 0 |

Note: Participation rate in Rhode Island is calculated differently by the Rhode Island Department of Education than the participation rate calculated by The College Board for national comparisons. Rhode Island school district performance represents public schools only. The College Board incorporates private and religious school performance in its average scores.

SOURCE: R.I. Department of Education, College Board, "Rhode Island Public Schools Education Indicators" (various years), and RIPEC calculations

New England Common Assessment Program

The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) is a collaborative effort among Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont to create a set of common assessments for grades 3-8 and 11. As of the fall, 2009 assessment, Maine has participated in the NECAP. Reading and math are tested every year in grades 3-8 and 11, and writing is assessed in grades 5, 8 and 11. In the fall of 2007, high school students in grade 11 took the reading, math and writing examinations for the first time. In the spring of 2008, students in grades 4, 8 and 11 took the first science assessment. The NECAP is generally administered in the fall (with the exception of science) and tests student knowledge from the prior year in reading, math, writing and science. All assessments are designed to test the student's knowledge and comprehension of grade level appropriate subject matter.

The NECAP exam was designed to fulfill the testing requirement of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation. It replaced Rhode Island's previous assessment tool, the New Standards Reference Exam (NSRE) in 2005. As with all exams used to meet the requirements of NCLB, schools and districts failing to show improvement two years in a row may face sanctions, outlined in the assessment and accountability section of this report.

Similar to the NAEP tests, the NECAP test results are expressed in terms of the percent of students achieving a specified level of proficiency, which are as follows:

- *Proficient with Distinction (Level 4)* – Denotes that the students demonstrate the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to participate and excel in instructional activities aligned with grade level expectations.
- *Proficient (Level 3)* – Students have minor gaps in prerequisite knowledge needed to participate and perform successfully in their current grade level.
- *Partially Proficient (Level 2)* – Indicates gaps in students prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to perform at grade level expectations.
- *Substantially Below Proficient (Level 1)* – Students at this level have extensive and significant gaps in the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to participate and perform at their grade level.

The following analysis examines school-district performance on the NECAP in reading, mathematics, science and writing. All numbers are expressed as percentages and reflect *district-wide* performance for all students in grades 4, 8 and 11 in science, 3-8 in reading and mathematics and grades 5 and 8 in writing. Because there is only three years of data for high school juniors, they are excluded from the individual reading, writing and mathematics portions of this analysis in order to include comparable, long-term data for those subjects; 11th grade results and graduation rates are included in a separate section. The science assessment includes 11th grade science results as 11th graders have been tested in all years of the science assessment

NECAP Reading

Fall of 2009 represented the fifth time the NECAP was taken by Rhode Island students in grades 3-8 and the second time the State's 11th grade students were assessed. As noted earlier, in order to provide an accurate comparison, data is presented for students in grades 3-8 only, with a summary of grade 11 results following in a later section.

Table 8
NECAP Reading Assessment 2005-2009*

| School District | 2005 | | | Percentage 2008 | | | 2009 | | | Change 2005-2009 | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | At or Above Proficient Change | Rank |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 32 | 34 | 34 | 25 | 30 | 46 | 21 | 28 | 51 | 17 | 2 |
| Newport | 24 | 30 | 46 | 14 | 25 | 60 | 15 | 24 | 61 | 15 | 5 |
| Pawtucket | 23 | 32 | 45 | 17 | 28 | 55 | 15 | 28 | 57 | 12 | 11 |
| Providence | 37 | 34 | 29 | 24 | 31 | 45 | 23 | 31 | 45 | 16 | 4 |
| Woonsocket | 28 | 33 | 39 | 20 | 27 | 53 | 19 | 25 | 55 | 16 | 3 |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 11 | 24 | 65 | 6 | 18 | 76 | 6 | 16 | 78 | 13 | 8 |
| East Providence | 15 | 28 | 57 | 11 | 22 | 66 | 12 | 21 | 67 | 10 | 17 |
| North Providence | 10 | 27 | 63 | 8 | 21 | 71 | 10 | 22 | 68 | 5 | 30 |
| Warwick | 10 | 22 | 68 | 7 | 16 | 77 | 6 | 15 | 79 | 11 | 16 |
| West Warwick | 17 | 28 | 55 | 13 | 22 | 65 | 12 | 22 | 66 | 11 | 15 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 2 | 6 | 92 | 2 | 5 | 93 | 2 | 5 | 93 | 1 | 36 |
| Bristol-Warren | 9 | 24 | 67 | 6 | 14 | 80 | 6 | 15 | 79 | 12 | 14 |
| Cumberland | 8 | 20 | 72 | 9 | 19 | 72 | 7 | 16 | 77 | 5 | 29 |
| East Greenwich | 4 | 12 | 84 | 3 | 10 | 88 | 2 | 8 | 90 | 6 | 27 |
| Jamestown | 8 | 15 | 77 | 4 | 12 | 84 | 6 | 9 | 86 | 9 | 21 |
| Johnston | 12 | 29 | 59 | 7 | 21 | 72 | 7 | 21 | 73 | 14 | 7 |
| Lincoln | 7 | 18 | 75 | 6 | 15 | 79 | 5 | 13 | 82 | 7 | 24 |
| Middletown | 11 | 23 | 66 | 8 | 18 | 74 | 9 | 19 | 72 | 6 | 28 |
| Narragansett | 6 | 17 | 77 | 4 | 10 | 85 | 3 | 11 | 85 | 8 | 22 |
| North Kingstown | 6 | 17 | 77 | 6 | 14 | 79 | 6 | 13 | 82 | 5 | 31 |
| Portsmouth | 8 | 15 | 77 | 6 | 13 | 81 | 4 | 13 | 83 | 6 | 26 |
| Smithfield | 5 | 17 | 78 | 4 | 12 | 84 | 4 | 9 | 87 | 9 | 18 |
| Westerly | 11 | 24 | 65 | 5 | 16 | 78 | 7 | 16 | 77 | 12 | 13 |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 11 | 24 | 65 | 9 | 23 | 67 | 10 | 23 | 68 | 3 | 35 |
| Chariho | 8 | 23 | 69 | 5 | 16 | 78 | 4 | 13 | 83 | 14 | 6 |
| Coventry | 10 | 23 | 67 | 6 | 16 | 78 | 6 | 15 | 79 | 12 | 12 |
| Exeter - West Greenwich | 8 | 22 | 70 | 6 | 17 | 77 | 5 | 18 | 77 | 7 | 25 |
| Foster | 9 | 18 | 73 | 7 | 13 | 79 | 6 | 12 | 82 | 9 | 20 |
| Foster-Glocester | 12 | 24 | 64 | 9 | 20 | 70 | 6 | 18 | 77 | 13 | 9 |
| Glocester | 11 | 18 | 71 | 7 | 15 | 78 | 7 | 15 | 79 | 8 | 23 |
| Little Compton | 6 | 15 | 79 | 3 | 13 | 84 | 3 | 13 | 83 | 4 | 32 |
| New Shoreham | 6 | 10 | 84 | 7 | 7 | 86 | 4 | 8 | 88 | 4 | 33 |
| North Smithfield | 9 | 23 | 68 | 9 | 18 | 73 | 3 | 10 | 87 | 19 | 1 |
| Scituate | 6 | 13 | 81 | 4 | 15 | 81 | 4 | 12 | 84 | 3 | 34 |
| South Kingstown | 8 | 16 | 76 | 5 | 13 | 82 | 4 | 11 | 85 | 9 | 19 |
| Tiverton | 12 | 25 | 63 | 7 | 16 | 76 | 8 | 17 | 75 | 12 | 10 |
| State Average | 17 | 25 | 58 | 11 | 21 | 68 | 11 | 20 | 70 | 12 | - |
| ME State Average | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9 | 22 | 69 | N/A | - |
| NH State Average | 11 | 22 | 67 | 7 | 18 | 75 | 7 | 16 | 77 | 10 | - |
| VT State Average | 10 | 23 | 67 | 10 | 19 | 71 | 10 | 18 | 72 | 5 | - |

* Denotes year in which test was administered

Scores represent all students in the district, grades 3-8; district totals have been adjusted to exclude 11th grade results from testing years 2008 and 2009 to allow for comparisons to prior years.

Proficient indicates the percent of students who achieved level 3 or level 4 distinctions on the assessment; partially proficient reflects the percent of students in a district who were classified as level 2; below proficient includes students who were classified as level 1.

SOURCE: Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont Departments of Education; RIPEC calculations

Since the NECAP was first administered in the fall of 2005, statewide student performance in grades 3-8 has steadily increased, from 58 percent of students scoring *at or above proficient* in 2005 to 70 percent of students achieving proficiency in 2009. Similarly, the percent of students scoring *partially proficient* or *substantially below proficient* has continued to decline. Although

Rhode Island continues to have a lower proficiency rate than either New Hampshire or Vermont, the Ocean State has seen more significant gains than either state over the past five years.

There was significant variation in performance between the districts on the reading assessment. Barrington had the highest percentage of students scoring proficient on the examination in the 2009 assessment, with a 93 percent proficiency rate, followed by East Greenwich where 90 percent of students tested *at or above proficient*. Providence and Central Falls were the lowest-performing districts, with 45 and 51 percent of students scoring *at or above proficient*, respectively.

At the same time, both Providence and Central Falls have seen some of the most significant gains in proficiency since the NECAP was first administered in 2005. Over the five years that the test has been administered, the share of students scoring *at or above proficient* increased by 16 percentage points in Providence (4th largest gain in the State) and by 17 percentage points in Central Falls (2nd highest increase in the State). The largest increase across all districts was in North Smithfield, where proficiency rates increased by 19 percentage points, from 68 percent proficient to 87 percent proficient.

NECAP Math

As with the reading assessment, proficiency rates on the mathematics assessment have increased statewide since the test was first administered in 2005. In 2009, 58 percent of Rhode Island students (in grades 3-8) scored *at or above proficient*, compared to 2005 when just 49 percent of students tested achieved proficiency. At the same time, however, Rhode Island lags all three peer states with regard to the percent of students who were rated as proficient: 61 percent of students in Maine, 71 percent of students in New Hampshire, and 66 percent of students in Vermont scored proficient on the 2009 assessment.

Barrington had the highest percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient* (89 percent), followed by East Greenwich (84 percent). Providence had the lowest percentage of students achieving proficiency – just 30 percent of the districts 3-8th graders were rated as proficient in the 2009 assessment – followed by Central Falls where 39 percent of students scored *at or above proficient*.

Between the 2005 assessment and the 2009 assessment, Central Falls experienced the largest increase in the percent of students who scored *at or above proficient* in the State; proficiency rates in the district increased by 18 percentage points over the past five assessments. Foster saw the second-largest increase in proficiency rates during this time period; 66 percent of students achieved proficiency in 2005, which increased to 81 percent of students in 2009, a gain of 15 percentage points.

Table 9
NECAP Mathematics Assessment 2005-2009*

| School District | 2005 | | | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | Change 2005-2009 | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Change | Rank |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 53 | 26 | 21 | 46 | 22 | 32 | 41 | 20 | 39 | 18 | 1 |
| Newport | 36 | 24 | 40 | 29 | 22 | 49 | 32 | 22 | 46 | 6 | 25 |
| Pawtucket | 35 | 26 | 39 | 33 | 24 | 42 | 30 | 24 | 46 | 7 | 23 |
| Providence | 52 | 25 | 23 | 42 | 25 | 33 | 45 | 24 | 30 | 7 | 20 |
| Woonsocket | 43 | 25 | 32 | 37 | 24 | 39 | 33 | 25 | 41 | 9 | 16 |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 26 | 25 | 49 | 18 | 22 | 60 | 18 | 21 | 61 | 12 | 7 |
| East Providence | 24 | 23 | 53 | 23 | 21 | 56 | 24 | 20 | 56 | 3 | 32 |
| North Providence | 30 | 28 | 42 | 26 | 23 | 50 | 26 | 24 | 49 | 7 | 22 |
| Warwick | 19 | 23 | 58 | 17 | 20 | 63 | 17 | 19 | 64 | 6 | 24 |
| West Warwick | 30 | 26 | 44 | 23 | 23 | 54 | 22 | 22 | 55 | 11 | 10 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 5 | 8 | 87 | 4 | 7 | 89 | 4 | 7 | 89 | 2 | 35 |
| Bristol-Warren | 19 | 21 | 60 | 15 | 15 | 70 | 14 | 16 | 71 | 11 | 13 |
| Cumberland | 19 | 23 | 58 | 19 | 18 | 63 | 16 | 16 | 68 | 10 | 15 |
| East Greenwich | 9 | 11 | 80 | 8 | 10 | 82 | 7 | 9 | 84 | 4 | 30 |
| Jamestown | 12 | 20 | 68 | 10 | 13 | 77 | 7 | 12 | 80 | 12 | 6 |
| Johnston | 25 | 29 | 46 | 22 | 26 | 52 | 20 | 26 | 53 | 7 | 21 |
| Lincoln | 14 | 17 | 69 | 14 | 15 | 71 | 13 | 15 | 71 | 2 | 34 |
| Middletown | 15 | 18 | 67 | 14 | 13 | 73 | 15 | 15 | 70 | 3 | 33 |
| Narragansett | 14 | 23 | 63 | 12 | 20 | 68 | 9 | 16 | 75 | 12 | 8 |
| North Kingstown | 13 | 17 | 70 | 11 | 14 | 75 | 11 | 14 | 75 | 5 | 26 |
| Portsmouth | 14 | 17 | 69 | 10 | 11 | 79 | 8 | 13 | 79 | 10 | 14 |
| Smithfield | 12 | 20 | 68 | 11 | 14 | 75 | 9 | 14 | 76 | 8 | 17 |
| Westerly | 22 | 24 | 54 | 13 | 17 | 70 | 15 | 18 | 68 | 14 | 5 |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 17 | 27 | 56 | 20 | 25 | 56 | 18 | 22 | 61 | 5 | 29 |
| Charlton | 18 | 24 | 58 | 15 | 19 | 66 | 11 | 16 | 73 | 15 | 3 |
| Coventry | 18 | 21 | 61 | 15 | 18 | 67 | 15 | 16 | 69 | 8 | 18 |
| Exeter - West Greenwich | 16 | 22 | 62 | 13 | 15 | 72 | 12 | 15 | 74 | 12 | 9 |
| Foster | 14 | 20 | 66 | 10 | 13 | 77 | 9 | 10 | 81 | 15 | 2 |
| Foster-Glocester | 17 | 21 | 62 | 21 | 21 | 59 | 15 | 19 | 65 | 3 | 31 |
| Glocester | 16 | 27 | 57 | 13 | 19 | 68 | 13 | 16 | 71 | 14 | 4 |
| Little Compton | 14 | 20 | 66 | 9 | 19 | 72 | 6 | 17 | 77 | 11 | 12 |
| New Shoreham | 6 | 19 | 75 | 12 | 16 | 72 | 6 | 19 | 75 | 0 | 36 |
| North Smithfield | 13 | 20 | 67 | 17 | 21 | 63 | 12 | 17 | 72 | 5 | 27 |
| Scituate | 11 | 18 | 71 | 11 | 19 | 70 | 9 | 16 | 76 | 5 | 28 |
| South Kingstown | 13 | 16 | 71 | 8 | 12 | 80 | 7 | 11 | 82 | 11 | 11 |
| Tiverton | 15 | 20 | 65 | 10 | 15 | 75 | 11 | 16 | 73 | 8 | 19 |
| State Average | 28 | 23 | 49 | 23 | 20 | 57 | 22 | 19 | 58 | 9 | - |
| ME State Average | - | - | - | - | - | - | 18 | 21 | 61 | N/A | - |
| NH State Average | 18 | 20 | 62 | 14 | 17 | 69 | 13 | 16 | 71 | 9 | - |
| VT State Average | 17 | 20 | 63 | 17 | 29 | 54 | 17 | 17 | 66 | 3 | - |

* Denotes year in which test was administered
 Scores represent all students in the district, grades 3-8; district totals have been adjusted to exclude 11th grade results from testing years 2008 and 2009 to allow for comparisons to prior years.
 Proficient indicates the percent of students who achieved level 3 or level 4 distinctions on the assessment; partially proficient reflects the percent of students in a district who were classified as level 2; below proficient includes students who were classified as level 1.
 SOURCE: Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont Departments of Education; RIPEC calculations

NECAP Science

Spring of 2008 (testing year 2007) was the first time the NECAP science assessment was taken by Rhode Island students. The most recent assessment was spring, 2009 (testing year 2008). Data presented in this section is for students in grades 4, 8 and 11.

Table 10
NECAP Science Assessment 2008-2009*

| School District | Percentage | | | | | | Change 2008-2009 | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | At or Above Proficient Change | Rank |
| | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | | |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 57 | 36 | 7 | 60 | 34 | 6 | -1 | 25 |
| Newport | 35 | 43 | 22 | 32 | 49 | 20 | -2 | 30 |
| Pawtucket | 43 | 45 | 12 | 44 | 43 | 12 | 0 | 21 |
| Providence | 63 | 32 | 5 | 61 | 32 | 7 | 2 | 17 |
| Woonsocket | 49 | 41 | 10 | 46 | 40 | 14 | 4 | 10 |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 29 | 45 | 26 | 28 | 46 | 26 | 0 | 21 |
| East Providence | 39 | 43 | 18 | 35 | 45 | 21 | 3 | 12 |
| North Providence | 36 | 47 | 17 | 36 | 48 | 16 | -1 | 25 |
| Warwick | 26 | 50 | 24 | 26 | 49 | 25 | 1 | 19 |
| West Warwick | 32 | 50 | 18 | 32 | 51 | 17 | -1 | 25 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 6 | 31 | 63 | 7 | 29 | 65 | 2 | 17 |
| Bristol-Warren | 26 | 46 | 28 | 24 | 47 | 29 | 1 | 19 |
| Cumberland | 28 | 46 | 26 | 23 | 48 | 30 | 4 | 10 |
| East Greenwich | 12 | 41 | 47 | 11 | 33 | 56 | 9 | 4 |
| Jamestown | 17 | 48 | 35 | 9 | 41 | 50 | 15 | 1 |
| Johnston | 21 | 48 | 31 | 30 | 48 | 21 | -10 | 36 |
| Lincoln | 27 | 40 | 33 | 19 | 45 | 36 | 3 | 12 |
| Middletown | 24 | 46 | 30 | 17 | 46 | 37 | 7 | 5 |
| Narragansett | 18 | 48 | 34 | 8 | 48 | 44 | 10 | 3 |
| North Kingstown | 18 | 45 | 37 | 17 | 46 | 37 | 0 | 21 |
| Portsmouth | 14 | 48 | 38 | 12 | 44 | 44 | 6 | 7 |
| Smithfield | 16 | 41 | 43 | 13 | 45 | 41 | -2 | 30 |
| Westerly | 21 | 48 | 31 | 21 | 49 | 30 | -1 | 25 |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 23 | 51 | 26 | 24 | 52 | 25 | -1 | 25 |
| Charlton | 21 | 45 | 34 | 15 | 47 | 37 | 3 | 12 |
| Coventry | 18 | 51 | 31 | 22 | 49 | 29 | -2 | 30 |
| Exeter - West Greenwich | 18 | 52 | 30 | 15 | 49 | 36 | 6 | 7 |
| Foster | 14 | 30 | 56 | 0 | 37 | 63 | 7 | 5 |
| Foster-Glocester | 31 | 52 | 17 | 27 | 51 | 22 | 5 | 9 |
| Glocester | 10 | 40 | 50 | 16 | 38 | 47 | -3 | 33 |
| Little Compton | 17 | 49 | 34 | 6 | 45 | 48 | 14 | 2 |
| New Shoreham | 17 | 34 | 49 | 14 | 41 | 45 | -4 | 34 |
| North Smithfield | 19 | 50 | 31 | 20 | 46 | 34 | 3 | 12 |
| Scituate | 15 | 47 | 38 | 14 | 48 | 38 | 0 | 21 |
| South Kingstown | 13 | 44 | 43 | 13 | 41 | 46 | 3 | 12 |
| Tiverton | 20 | 48 | 32 | 19 | 55 | 26 | -6 | 35 |
| State Average | 33 | 43 | 24 | 31 | 43 | 25 | 1 | - |
| NH State Average | 21 | 46 | 33 | 20 | 46 | 33 | 0 | - |
| VT State Average | 22 | 45 | 33 | 22 | 44 | 34 | 1 | - |

* Denotes year in which test was administered

Scores represent all students in the district, grades 3-8 and 11.

Proficient indicates the percent of students who achieved level 3 or level 4 distinctions on the assessment; partially proficient reflects the percent of students in a district who were classified as level 2; below proficient includes students who were classified as level 1.

SOURCE: Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont Departments of Education; RIPEC calculations

Across the State, 25 percent of students scored *at or above proficient* on the science assessment in 2009, compared to 33 percent in New Hampshire and 34 percent in Vermont (NOTE: Maine has not participated in the science assessment yet). Between the 2008 and 2009 assessments, the percent of students achieving proficiency increased by one percentage point in both Rhode Island and Vermont, and was static in New Hampshire.

Barrington and Foster were the top-performing districts (with proficiency rates of 65 percent and 63 percent, respectively), while Central Falls and Providence were the lowest-performing districts with proficiency rates of 6 and 7 percent, respectively). Since the test has only been administered for two years there is little data available for trend analysis; however, both Jamestown and Little Compton saw significant increases in the percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient*.

NECAP Writing

The writing assessment administered in the fall of 2009 for grades 5 and 8 was a pilot test that will be used to construct future assessments; results were only published for 11th graders. In order to ensure comparability between years, the fall of 2009 assessment results have been excluded from this table. As noted earlier, results for 11th graders are included in a separate section.

**Table 11
NECAP Writing Assessment 2005-2008***

| School District | 2005 | | | Percentage 2007 | | | 2008 | | | Change 2005-2008 | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | Below Proficient | Partially Proficient | At or Above Proficient | At or Above Proficient Change | Rank |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 36 | 38 | 26 | 33 | 39 | 28 | 38 | 37 | 25 | -1 | 23 |
| Newport | 24 | 36 | 40 | 26 | 43 | 31 | 19 | 33 | 48 | 8 | 8 |
| Pawtucket | 17 | 35 | 48 | 23 | 39 | 38 | 22 | 38 | 41 | -7 | 32 |
| Providence | 36 | 35 | 29 | 34 | 38 | 28 | 29 | 37 | 33 | 4 | 14 |
| Woonsocket | 32 | 42 | 26 | 33 | 35 | 32 | 28 | 34 | 38 | 12 | 5 |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 11 | 32 | 57 | 13 | 35 | 52 | 10 | 29 | 62 | 5 | 13 |
| East Providence | 14 | 34 | 52 | 20 | 38 | 42 | 18 | 33 | 49 | -3 | 28 |
| North Providence | 9 | 31 | 60 | 15 | 39 | 46 | 11 | 32 | 58 | -2 | 26 |
| Warwick | 12 | 32 | 56 | 14 | 35 | 51 | 12 | 28 | 60 | 4 | 15 |
| West Warwick | 14 | 33 | 53 | 19 | 33 | 48 | 18 | 36 | 46 | -7 | 31 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 5 | 14 | 81 | 5 | 19 | 76 | 4 | 14 | 82 | 1 | 19 |
| Bristol-Warren | 11 | 32 | 57 | 10 | 31 | 59 | 9 | 27 | 64 | 7 | 9 |
| Cumberland | 11 | 32 | 57 | 19 | 34 | 47 | 14 | 34 | 53 | -4 | 29 |
| East Greenwich | 4 | 20 | 76 | 10 | 27 | 63 | 5 | 21 | 74 | -2 | 25 |
| Jamestown | 11 | 27 | 62 | 11 | 41 | 48 | 6 | 18 | 76 | 14 | 2 |
| Johnston | 11 | 31 | 58 | 11 | 39 | 50 | 8 | 36 | 56 | -2 | 27 |
| Lincoln | 8 | 26 | 66 | 13 | 33 | 54 | 8 | 24 | 68 | 2 | 17 |
| Middletown | 13 | 40 | 47 | 14 | 33 | 53 | 11 | 30 | 59 | 12 | 4 |
| Narragansett | 6 | 22 | 72 | 12 | 26 | 62 | 8 | 20 | 73 | 1 | 20 |
| North Kingstown | 9 | 22 | 69 | 10 | 29 | 61 | 9 | 27 | 63 | -6 | 30 |
| Portsmouth | 12 | 30 | 58 | 15 | 39 | 46 | 8 | 28 | 64 | 6 | 11 |
| Smithfield | 4 | 20 | 76 | 5 | 28 | 67 | 5 | 18 | 76 | 0 | 21 |
| Westerly | 14 | 34 | 76 | 10 | 31 | 59 | 9 | 26 | 65 | -11 | 35 |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 10 | 35 | 55 | 15 | 36 | 49 | 15 | 41 | 44 | -11 | 34 |
| Charlho | 11 | 30 | 59 | 8 | 32 | 60 | 8 | 21 | 71 | 12 | 6 |
| Coventry | 12 | 33 | 55 | 9 | 30 | 61 | 9 | 26 | 65 | 10 | 7 |
| Exeter - West Greenwich | 9 | 27 | 64 | 17 | 39 | 44 | 9 | 28 | 63 | -1 | 24 |
| Foster | 6 | 19 | 75 | 5 | 11 | 84 | 5 | 15 | 80 | 5 | 12 |
| Foster-Glocester | 19 | 38 | 43 | 14 | 39 | 47 | 21 | 37 | 42 | -1 | 22 |
| Glocester | 19 | 33 | 48 | 12 | 39 | 49 | 11 | 26 | 63 | 15 | 1 |
| Little Compton | 1 | 34 | 65 | 6 | 16 | 78 | 5 | 29 | 67 | 2 | 18 |
| New Shoreham | 5 | 33 | 62 | 17 | 13 | 70 | 5 | 19 | 76 | 14 | 2 |
| North Smithfield | 8 | 34 | 58 | 20 | 38 | 42 | 19 | 36 | 45 | -13 | 36 |
| Scituate | 4 | 17 | 79 | 5 | 25 | 70 | 9 | 21 | 70 | -9 | 33 |
| South Kingstown | 9 | 25 | 66 | 9 | 17 | 74 | 10 | 20 | 70 | 4 | 16 |
| Tiverton | 14 | 31 | 55 | 20 | 40 | 40 | 9 | 29 | 62 | 7 | 10 |
| State Average | 17 | 32 | 51 | 19 | 34 | 47 | 16 | 31 | 53 | 2 | - |
| NH State Average | 16 | 34 | 50 | 17 | 35 | 48 | 14 | 30 | 55 | 5 | - |
| VT State Average | 14 | 33 | 53 | 20 | 32 | 48 | 17 | 29 | 54 | 1 | - |

* Denotes year in which test was administered
Scores represent all students in the district, grades 5 and 8

Proficient indicates the percent of students who achieved level 3 or level 4 distinctions on the assessment; partially proficient reflects the percent of students in a district who were classified as level 2; below proficient includes students who were classified as level 1.

NOTE: The 2009 writing test for grades 5 and 8 was a pilot test which will be used to construct operational test forms. As such, writing test results for 2009 were reported for 11th graders only. In order to provide comparable historic results, NECAP writing scores are not shown for testing year 2009.

SOURCE: Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont Departments of Education; RIPEC calculations

In the 2008 writing assessment, 53 percent of Rhode Island students (grades 5 and 8) achieved a score that was *at or above proficient* compared with 55 percent of students in New Hampshire and 54 percent of students in Vermont. Since 2005, proficiency rates in New Hampshire have

increased the most of the three states, growing by five percentage points. Proficiency rates in Rhode Island increased by 2 percentage points while the share of students scoring proficient in Vermont increased by 1 percentage point.

As with the other assessments, there was wide variation in scores across districts. The percent of students who were rated as proficient ranged from a high of 82 percent in Barrington to a low of 25 percent in Central Falls. Progress in writing has been less even compared to reading and math; there is significant variation across years within many districts. For example, the proficiency rates in Jamestown ranged from 62 percent in 2005, down to 48 percent in 2007, back up to 76 percent in 2008. Across all years of the assessment, the percent of students scoring *at or above proficient* increased the most in Gloucester (15 percentage point increase) and decreased the most in North Smithfield, where scores fell by 13 percentage points.

11th Grade Performance

This section examines how 11th grade students performed on the NECAP, as well as showing graduation rates. NECAP data is shown for the year in which the test was administered, while graduation rate data is for the spring of the year shown. Graduation rate data is cohort data (v. event completion rate). Cohort data is calculated by dividing the number of on-time graduates (those that graduated in four years) by the number of students who entered 9th grade for the first time four years prior, adjusting for transfers or other exits.

Statewide, 73 percent of students in grade 11 scored *at or above proficient* on the 2009 NECAP reading analysis, which was the same as New Hampshire. In Vermont, 69 percent of 11th graders were rated as proficient. Maine did not test 11th grade students. Although there was variation in performance across districts, in most cases students in grade 11 had equal or higher proficiency rates when compared to students in grades 3-8 in the 2009 testing year. This was particularly true in the urban districts where the percent of 11th graders scoring *at or above proficient* ranged from four percent higher than the proficiency rate across grades 3-8 in Central Falls to 20 percent higher in Newport where 81 percent of 11th graders scored *at or above proficient*.

Since the test was first administered in 2007, proficiency rates across the entire state increased by 12 percentage points, a larger increase than in either New Hampshire or Vermont. The largest increase was in Newport, where proficiency rates on the reading assessment increased by 24 percentage points. The second largest increase was in Central Falls, where reading proficiency increased by 22 percentage points. Three districts – Johnston, Middletown and North Smithfield – saw proficiency rates decline during this time.

In contrast to the reading assessment, the State's 11th graders tended to perform worse on the mathematics assessment than did students in grades 3-8. In 2009, 28 percent of students in grade 11 scored *at or above proficient*, compared to 58 percent of students in grades 3-8; across all districts 11th graders achieved lower proficiency rates than students in 3rd through 8th grade.

In New Hampshire and Vermont, 33 and 35 percent of 11th graders, respectively, scored proficient on the assessments. However, although Rhode Island under-performed compared to New Hampshire and Vermont on the math assessment, proficiency rates in math vary across the

31 districts that reported scores for 11th graders, from a low of 7 percent in Central Falls to a high of 71 percent in East Greenwich.

Over the past three years, proficiency rates on the mathematics assessment increased by six percentage points in Rhode Island, compared to a gain of five percentage points in both New Hampshire and Vermont. Burrillville saw the percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient* increase by 25 percentage points which was the largest gain in the State. By contrast, proficiency rates declined in East Providence, Exeter-West Greenwich and North Kingstown.

Only 11th grade students were tested in the 2009 writing assessment, while students in grades 5 and 8 took a pilot test that will be used to design future tests. Across the State, 55 percent of 11th graders demonstrated proficiency on the examination, compared to 50 percent in New Hampshire and 51 percent in Vermont. In addition, Rhode Island saw a larger increase in the percent of students scoring *at or above proficient* over the three testing years than either New Hampshire or Vermont; proficiency rates in Rhode Island increased by 18 percentage points, compared to an increase of 17 percentage points in New Hampshire and 12 percentage points in Vermont.

East Greenwich and Bristol-Warren had the highest percent of students scoring *at or above proficient* on the assessment (82 percent and 78 percent, respectively), while the lowest-scoring districts were Central Falls and Exeter-West Greenwich (32 percent and 36 percent, respectively). Since the first assessment in 2007, scores have increased in almost all districts. West Warwick, where proficiency rates increased 29 percentage points, saw the largest gain of all the districts, followed by Chariho, which saw an increase of 27 percentage points.

Statewide, the spring, 2009 graduation rate was 76 percent and increase of six percentage points from the statewide graduation rate in the spring of 2007 of 70 percent. Neither New Hampshire nor Vermont has released 2009 cohort graduation data. However, both states had higher graduation rates in both the spring of 2007 and the spring of 2008 compared to Rhode Island.

Graduation rates in the spring of 2009 ranged from 47 percent in Central Falls to 96 percent in Barrington. In general, graduation rates in the urban core districts were the lowest in the State, ranging from 47 percent in Central Falls to 75 percent in Newport; however, Newport's graduation rate was higher than rates in East Providence and West Warwick, and was the same as the graduation rate in Warwick.

Table 12
11th Grade NECAP Proficiency and Graduation Rates - 2007-2009

| | 2007 | | | | Percentage 2008 | | | | 2009 | | | | Change 2007-2009 | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Reading | Math | Writing | Grad Rate | Reading | Math | Writing | Grad Rate | Reading | Math | Writing | Grad Rate | Reading | Math | Writing | Grad Rate |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 33 | 3 | 19 | 46 | 44 | 4 | 29 | 52 | 55 | 7 | 32 | 47 | 22 | 4 | 13 | 1 |
| Newport | 57 | 24 | 36 | 60 | 66 | 23 | 44 | 66 | 81 | 31 | 57 | 75 | 24 | 7 | 21 | 15 |
| Pawtucket | 46 | 12 | 28 | 48 | 54 | 14 | 33 | 57 | 62 | 13 | 46 | 55 | 16 | 1 | 18 | 7 |
| Providence | 45 | 10 | 27 | 58 | 55 | 14 | 29 | 63 | 60 | 11 | 43 | 66 | 15 | 1 | 16 | 8 |
| Woonsocket | 50 | 11 | 21 | 54 | 50 | 16 | 30 | 60 | 61 | 12 | 39 | 62 | 11 | 1 | 18 | 8 |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 56 | 18 | 27 | 80 | 68 | 22 | 38 | 82 | 75 | 23 | 53 | 80 | 19 | 5 | 26 | 0 |
| East Providence | 53 | 14 | 25 | 66 | 61 | 18 | 28 | 76 | 61 | 13 | 48 | 74 | 8 | -1 | 23 | 8 |
| North Providence | 64 | 19 | 45 | 88 | 74 | 20 | 35 | 88 | 77 | 22 | 67 | 81 | 13 | 3 | 22 | -6 |
| Warwick | 64 | 18 | 36 | 66 | 68 | 23 | 40 | 72 | 69 | 20 | 53 | 75 | 5 | 2 | 17 | 9 |
| West Warwick | 58 | 21 | 28 | 67 | 64 | 22 | 39 | 68 | 64 | 23 | 57 | 69 | 6 | 2 | 29 | 2 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 90 | 63 | 60 | 96 | 94 | 71 | 76 | 95 | 95 | 66 | 71 | 96 | 5 | 3 | 11 | 0 |
| Bristol-Warren | 77 | 28 | 58 | 75 | 87 | 40 | 25 | 80 | 84 | 32 | 78 | 85 | 7 | 4 | 20 | 10 |
| Cumberland | 61 | 20 | 30 | 79 | 78 | 33 | 43 | 81 | 82 | 34 | 56 | 83 | 21 | 14 | 26 | 4 |
| East Greenwich | 88 | 54 | 67 | 96 | 90 | 64 | 77 | 94 | 92 | 71 | 82 | 94 | 4 | 17 | 15 | -2 |
| Johnston | 68 | 17 | 49 | 63 | 59 | 21 | 44 | 78 | 63 | 18 | 50 | 70 | -5 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Lincoln | 75 | 35 | 49 | 86 | 81 | 42 | 55 | 83 | 83 | 52 | 70 | 85 | 8 | 17 | 21 | -1 |
| Middletown | 78 | 33 | 55 | 82 | 79 | 43 | 49 | 84 | 73 | 46 | 59 | 82 | -5 | 13 | 4 | 0 |
| Narragansett | 72 | 36 | 44 | 90 | 84 | 44 | 61 | 94 | 93 | 54 | 62 | 86 | 21 | 18 | 18 | -3 |
| North Kingstown | 82 | 43 | 58 | 90 | 72 | 41 | 45 | 88 | 83 | 42 | 65 | 92 | 1 | -1 | 7 | 2 |
| Portsmouth | 81 | 37 | 57 | 88 | 89 | 43 | 57 | 86 | 87 | 58 | 67 | 83 | 6 | 21 | 10 | -5 |
| Smithfield | 72 | 31 | 47 | 86 | 87 | 30 | 43 | 88 | 88 | 35 | 64 | 90 | 16 | 4 | 17 | 4 |
| Westerly | 72 | 28 | 51 | 88 | 77 | 33 | 53 | 88 | 81 | 37 | 59 | 89 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 64 | 20 | 28 | 71 | 72 | 30 | 43 | 75 | 73 | 45 | 45 | 85 | 9 | 25 | 17 | 14 |
| Chariho | 70 | 29 | 48 | 79 | 76 | 31 | 49 | 84 | 86 | 41 | 75 | 85 | 16 | 12 | 27 | 6 |
| Coventry | 64 | 26 | 39 | 81 | 67 | 30 | 47 | 83 | 75 | 27 | 65 | 79 | 11 | 1 | 26 | -2 |
| Exeter - West Greenwich | 70 | 30 | 44 | 86 | 81 | 38 | 40 | 87 | 71 | 28 | 36 | 87 | 1 | -2 | -8 | 1 |
| Foster-Glocester | 72 | 19 | 49 | 94 | 82 | 21 | 44 | 87 | 86 | 38 | 66 | 88 | 14 | 19 | 17 | -6 |
| North Smithfield | 77 | 29 | 38 | 87 | 83 | 35 | 47 | 90 | 73 | 39 | 55 | 84 | -4 | 10 | 17 | -3 |
| Scituate | 71 | 27 | 41 | 85 | 83 | 46 | 48 | 84 | 88 | 42 | 51 | 85 | 17 | 15 | 10 | 0 |
| South Kingstown | 81 | 42 | 54 | 86 | 86 | 48 | 65 | 86 | 84 | 50 | 66 | 87 | 3 | 8 | 12 | 1 |
| Tiverton | 72 | 29 | 50 | 79 | 82 | 24 | 51 | 83 | 82 | 31 | 66 | 83 | 10 | 2 | 16 | 4 |
| State Average | 61 | 22 | 37 | 70 | 69 | 26 | 42 | 74 | 73 | 28 | 55 | 76 | 12 | 6 | 18 | 5 |
| NH State Average | 67 | 28 | 33 | 86 | 72 | 32 | 39 | 88 | 73 | 33 | 50 | ND | 6 | 5 | 17 | - |
| VT State Average | 68 | 30 | 39 | 85 | 72 | 35 | 42 | 86 | 69 | 35 | 51 | ND | 1 | 5 | 12 | - |

* Denotes year in which test was administered for NECAP scores and the year of graduation for graduation rates.

Scores represent all 11th grade students who were tested in the district. Proficient indicates the percent of students who achieved level 3 or level 4 distinctions on the assessment. Graduation rates are cohort graduation rates -- students who were enrolled in 9th grade four years prior and graduated in four years, accounting for transfers in and out.

SOURCE: Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont Departments of Education; RIPEC calculations

Assessment and Accountability

NCLB Overview

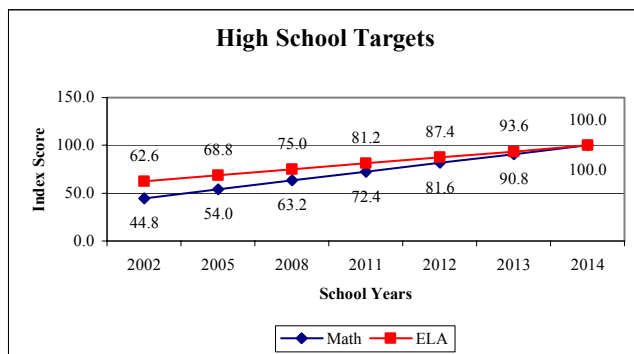
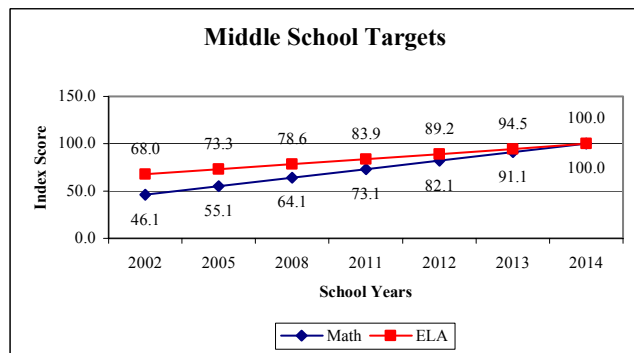
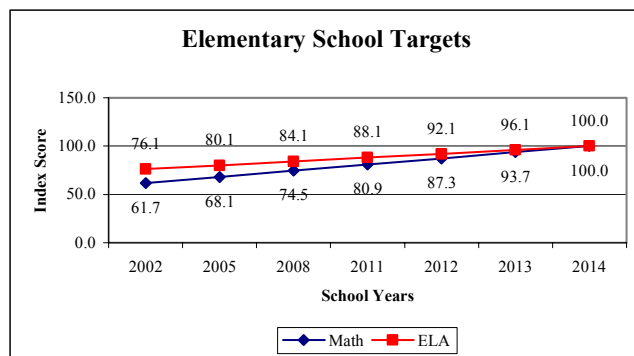
Since the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) in 2002, assessment results have become increasingly important. Under the legislation, schools that receive Title I funds (for high-poverty schools) and fail to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) are subject to corrective actions that range from allowing students to transfer to another school in the same district to a complete restructuring of the school.

The NCLB legislation mandates that by the year 2013-2014, all students in public school will reach the *proficient* level set in reading and mathematics. In order to determine if such progress is being made, the legislation requires yearly testing of all students in grades 3-8, and students in one high school grade for both English/language arts (ELA) and math, and requires one year of testing at each school level in science. Rhode Island, along with New Hampshire and Vermont, developed the grade level expectations and the NECAP to comply with this requirement. Recently, Maine has adopted the NECAP as their assessment tool. Recently, discussions around the reauthorization of NCLB have proposed eliminating the 100 percent proficiency rates in exchange for a “college and career ready” standard. To date, no legislation has passed.

Meeting AYP

To determine school progress, Rhode Island uses an *Index Proficiency Score* (IPS). Student scores on the NECAP are translated into a specific index score, which is then aggregated to determine the school’s Index Proficiency Score. Whether a school has met AYP is determined by whether the school has met its annual targets, primarily based on meeting the predetermined minimum IPS. In order to determine the IPS, states set a

Chart 1
Rhode Island Performance Targets



SOURCE: RI Department of Education

starting point, based on the performance of their lowest-achieving demographic group or the lowest-achieving schools in the state, whichever is higher. The state must then set thresholds that a school or district must reach every two years in order to show AYP. These thresholds must be raised every three years until 2013-2014, when all students must demonstrate proficiency in reading and math.

In Rhode Island, thresholds were set using the New Standards Reference Exams (NSRE). Average NSRE results from 2000-2002 were used to establish the baseline for ELA and math, and the school's IPS was calculated. Schools were then rank-ordered and the score at which 20.0 percent of the student population scored *below* was used as the statewide baseline.

Schools must meet the minimum Index Proficiency Score for both the total school population and within each designated sub-group. In addition, schools and districts have three non-assessment targets: participation rates in math and English language arts assessments, and attendance or graduation rate.

Intervention Status

Schools that meet AYP in the previous year and meet the AYP requirements for both ELA and math for the "all students" subgroup can be labeled "caution" if three or fewer AYP targets are missed. If a school has missed more than three targets after satisfying AYP requirements in the previous year, it is classified as having made "insufficient progress". If a school did not meet all AYP requirements in the previous year and misses any targets, the school is classified as having made "insufficient progress".

After two years of failing to make progress in the same content area a school is identified for improvement both for Rhode Island and NCLB purposes (if the school receives Title 1 funding). A school is also subject to being designated as "in need of improvement" if it fails to make AYP for two consecutive years in a non-academic area. Schools must demonstrate progress for two consecutive years to be removed from intervention status.

Under Rhode Island State Law, schools in this category are subject to Progressive Support and Intervention (PS&I). The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is responsible for offering technical and policy support for at least three years to these schools. After three years, RIDE may take increasing control of schools which may culminate in reconstitution of schools; however, there is no specified timeline in State law. Schools that receive Title 1 funding are subject to sanctions identified under NCLB that follow a specified timeline as follows:

- 1st year of "identified for improvement": Students may transfer to another school within the district (school choice);
- 2nd year: School choice plus supplemental education services;
- 3rd year: School choice, supplemental education, and possible corrective action; and
- 4th year: All of the above, plus possible reconstitution which may include replacing staff, turning the school operations over to the State, or re-opening the school as a charter school.

Under Federal definitions, schools that fail to make AYP after four years (two years of "insufficient progress" and two years of being classified as "in need of improvement" are schools

targeted for “corrective action”. After five years, schools are “in restructuring”; year five is the planning year and year six is the implementation year. Schools that are in restructuring must do one of the following:

- Close and reopen as a charter;
- Contract with a private management company;
- State management;
- Replace all or most of the staff; or
- Enact some form of significant governance restructuring.

School Improvement Grants

One criticism of NCLB is that, although a timeline for sanctions is established, the law does little to enforce the application of sanctions to chronically under-performing schools and school districts. A study performed by the GAO (*No Child Left Behind Act: Education Should Clarify Guidance and Address Potential Compliance Issues for Schools in Corrective Action and Restructuring Status*, 2007) indicated that, while the majority of schools in restructuring status implemented required activities, many did not meet NCLB requirements; approximately 40 percent of districts did not take any of the five restructuring options required by the Act.

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the 2009 Department of Education Appropriations Act, the US Department of Education defined specific criteria that states must use to award \$3.5 billion in “School Improvement Grants” (SIGs) to the lowest-achieving Title I schools. Each qualifying school would be eligible to receive \$500,000 per year for up to three years as long as the school demonstrates progress.

The regulations have two parts. The first part outlines three tiers of schools that are eligible for the funds:

- *Tier I*: the lowest-achieving five percent or the lowest-achieving five of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, whichever number of schools is greater.
- *Tier II*: Equally low-achieving secondary schools (both middle and high schools) in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds.
- *Tier III*: All other Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not Tier I schools.

In Rhode Island, Tier I and II schools include high schools that have graduation rates that are lower than 60.0 percent over a number of years. Tier III schools are those that are in the bottom 6.0 – 10.0 percent of Title I schools, or the next five lowest-achieving schools, whichever is greater.

The second part of the regulations outlines steps a local education agency (LEA) must take to receive the SIG funds from the state. There are four interventions for which funds could be used under the regulations:

- *Turnaround Model*: includes, among other actions, replacing the principal and no less than 50 percent of the staff, adopting a new governance structure, and implementing a revised instructional program;

- *Restart Model*: requires the LEA to close the school and reopen it under the management of a charter or other educational management organization;
- *School Closure*: closes the school and requires that students who attend the school would be enrolled in other, high-performing schools in the LEA; or
- *Transformation Model*: requires the district address four specific areas to turn around the school including developing teacher and school leader effectiveness; implementing comprehensive reform strategies; extending learning time and creating community-oriented schools; and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

Rhode Island Overview

Statewide, all students met the index proficiency score (IPS) in both English/language arts (ELA) and math at all education levels. All subgroups met the IPS goal at the elementary level except for the Native American subgroup in ELA and the IEP subgroup in ELA and math. At the middle school level, both the IEP and ELL subgroups fell short of the IPS goal but made sufficient progress. Students with disabilities were the only subgroup to not meet the IPS in math at the middle school level. At the statewide high school level, the ELA IPS goal was met for all subgroups except for students with disabilities and ELL students. The math IPS goal was met for all students, and the Asian, Native American, and white subgroup. The IPS goal was not met for all other subgroups: African American, Hispanic, students with disabilities, ELL students and economically disadvantaged students.

District Performance

School districts are classified as in need of improvement if they miss one or more targets at more than one school level (elementary, middle or high school), or if more than 40 percent of the schools make insufficient progress. Districts on watch status are those that have failed to meet AYP for one year. A district may remain on watch status for multiple years until it misses targets in the same area of evaluation (e.g., math) for two consecutive years. If districts miss annual targets in the same subject area for two or more years they are moved to intervention status. Districts classified as “continuing” met AYP targets for one year but must meet AYP for two consecutive years to be removed from intervention status.

In the 2008-09 school year, the most recent year for which AYP data are available, there were no schools added to watch status. Nine districts in the State were in intervention status during the 2008-09 school year. Coventry, Cumberland, Portsmouth and Warwick were removed from watch status in the 2008-09 school year, and Middletown and Newport were removed from intervention

Table 13
Districts Not Meeting AYP
School Year 2008-09

| Intervention Status | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>1st Year</i> | North Kingstown |
| <i>2nd Year</i> | Cranston East Providence |
| <i>2nd Year Continuing*</i> | North Providence |
| <i>5th Year</i> | West Warwick |
| <i>7th Year</i> | Central Falls Pawtucket Woonsocket |
| <i>8th Year</i> | Providence |

* Districts met AYP requirements but must meet AYP for two consecutive years to be removed from intervention status.

During the 2008-2009 school year, no school districts were placed on the Watch List.

SOURCE: R.I. Department of Education

status. North Providence met AYP targets and was moved to Second Year “continuing” status, while East Providence remained on intervention status for a second year. Eight of the ten urban districts are currently in intervention status. North Kingstown is the only non-urban school to be in intervention status, after being placed in watch status in the 2007-08 school year.

School Performance

Individual schools are classified in the same manner as school districts. Only schools that receive Title 1 funding are subject to the provisions of NCLB, while schools that do not receive Title 1 funds participate in Rhode Island’s Progressive Support and Intervention program if they do not make AYP. The percentage of schools in Rhode Island that met all targets in the 2008-09 testing year was 78.5 percent, an increase of 5.1 percent since the prior testing year. One should note that testing targets were increased in 2008, which may have an impact on the number of schools that failed to meet AYP goals in that year.

In the 2008-09 testing year, all of the State’s elementary, middle and high schools saw increases in the percentage of AYP targets met. The largest increase was in the middle schools, in which the percentage of schools meeting all AYP targets rose from 72.2 percent in 2007-08 to 94.4 percent in 2008-09. Additionally, the State’s high schools increased the percentage of schools meeting all AYP targets from a low in the 2007-08 testing year of 45.6 percent to 55.9 percent in the 2008-09 testing year.

Of the 56 schools statewide that did not meet AYP in the 2008-09 school year, 12 schools were placed on watch status and 44 were classified as in need of improvement or faced sanctions. Approximately one third of the schools that were in need of improvement (11 schools) were non-Title 1, while the remaining schools were subject to various stages of intervention based on NCLB and State mandates.

Table 14
Percent of Schools Meeting All Targets
2005-06 to 2008-09

| Schools | School Year | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Elementary Schools | 71.5% | 87.6% | 81.9% | 85.3% |
| Middle Schools | 63.0% | 75.9% | 72.2% | 94.4% |
| High Schools | 56.1% | 59.6% | 45.6% | 55.9% |
| Total | 67.1% | 80.3% | 73.4% | 78.5% |

SOURCE: R.I. Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

The majority of schools that did not meet AYP were located in the State’s urban core districts (note, RIPEC uses a different classification system than RIDE regarding urban/non-urban districts. Please see the Glossary at the end of this report for a description of RIPEC’s classification). In the 2008-09 school year, 37 schools located within the urban core did not meet AYP, compared to seven in the urban ring, four in suburban communities, and five in emerging suburban districts. The remaining five were State-run and charter schools.

Persistently Low-Achieving Schools

In the 2008-09 school year, six schools were identified as “persistently low-achieving”, and thus would qualify for additional funding under the SIG program as Tier I schools. The list includes two elementary schools, both in Providence (Lillian Feinstein Elementary School, Sackett Street, and Charlotte Woods Elementary School); one middle school, also in Providence (Roger Williams Middle School); and three high schools, two of which are in Providence (William B. Cooley/Health & Science Technical Academy and Feinstein High School) and one of which is in Central Falls (Central Falls Senior High School). In order to qualify for funding, as noted earlier, these schools are required to implement one of the four reform models outlined above.

Recently, the Commissioner of Education has approved the plan submitted for the Providence schools listed above. The district has opted to create a labor-management partnership under the “restart” model to run four of the schools listed above: Charlotte Woods Elementary, Lillian Feinstein Elementary School, Sackett Street, Roger Williams Middle School and William B. Cooley/Health & Science Technical Academy. Feinstein High School is slated for closure under the district’s separate facilities plan. The remaining school – Central Falls High School – is in the process of renegotiating their model.

Demographics

Highlights

State to State Comparison

- Although there were fewer Rhode Island families living in poverty in 2008 when compared to the national average (11.7 percent v. 13.2 percent), the State had the second-highest percentage of families living in poverty in New England (behind Maine).
- While fewer Rhode Island adults had at least a high school education compared to the national and regional average (83.7 v. 85 percent), the State had a higher percentage of adults with at least a bachelor's degree compared to the national average and Maine (30.0 v. 27.7 and 25.4 percent, respectively).
- In contrast to national trends, every state in New England saw student enrollment decline between the 2002-03 and 2007-08 school years. During this time period, Rhode Island saw student enrollment decline by 7.2 percent, the largest drop in enrollment of the six states.
- Nationally, enrollment in English Language Learner (ELL) programs declined 3.3 percent between 2002-03 and 2007-08. In Rhode Island, ELL enrollments declined by 1.5 percent, while ELL enrollments increased slightly or remained the same in the rest of the region.
- Special education enrollments decreased slightly across the country as a whole and in Rhode Island during this time period; however, in both years special education enrollments in the State were higher than the national average and other New England states.
- In the 2007-08 school year, free/reduced lunch (FRL) students accounted for a larger share of total student enrollment nationally, and across New England compared to the 2002-03 school year; however FRL enrollments in all six states was below the national average.

Rhode Island District Comparison

- Between the 2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, public school enrollment in Rhode Island fell from 151,672 students to 140,960 students, a 7.1 percent decrease. Of the State's 36 districts, Barrington was the only one to see an increase in population during this time.
- Over the past five years, statewide ELL enrollment has declined by 41 students, or 0.6 percent. At the same time, due to declines in total enrollment, ELL students constitute a slightly larger share of total statewide enrollment in the 2009-10 school year.
- Students with an individualized education plan (IEP; special education students) accounted for 18.2 percent of total enrollment in the 2009-10 school year, compared to 20.3 percent in the 2004-05 school year. The majority of students with an IEP are in one of the State's ten urban districts; however, urban IEP enrollments as a share of student population are only slightly higher than across the rest of the State.
- The percentage of students enrolled in the FRL program has increased over the past five years. In 2004-05, there were 52,700 students enrolled in the program, compared to 58,880 in 2009-10, an increase of 11.7 percent.
- Although the ten urban core districts account for roughly 55 percent of total 2009-10 enrollment in the State, 78.9 percent of students in the FRL program attend school in one of the districts.

Overview

Student performance, and the cost of educating students, is impacted by a variety of economic and demographic factors. Characteristics such as poverty, language barriers or learning disabilities play a role in shaping student performance and, as such, should be taken into consideration when examining the results of performance on standardized exams and evaluating education expenditures.

Regions and states face different situations with regard to the specific mix of demographic and economic characteristics in their schools and districts. Within New England, and even within Rhode Island, there is significant variation with regard to poverty, language abilities, and special needs students. These factors also tend to be concentrated in the Nation's central cities, which exacerbates the challenges faced by urban districts. For example, although each district in Rhode Island has students eligible for free or reduced lunch, a frequently used proxy for poverty, almost 60 percent of those students reside in one of the State's five urban core cities. If the urban ring cities are included, the State's ten urban communities capture approximately 80 percent of free/reduced lunch students. This means that the other 26 school districts combined have about 20 percent of students who are considered "poor".

The following section considers a number of different indicators that research has found impact educational outcomes in order to place Rhode Island's academic performance in context, both across the region and throughout the State. National data was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Bureau of the Census. Rhode Island State data comes from the Rhode Island Department of Education. The most recent year for which nationally comparable data are available from NCES is school year 2007-08. The most recent Census data is available for calendar year 2008. Rhode Island-specific statistics use school year 2009-10 enrollments.

Indicators in this section include:

- *Poverty* – the percent of families below the poverty line and at or below the poverty line (\$21,834 for a family of four with two children in 2008);
- *Adult Educational Attainment* – the highest grade of school completed, or the highest degree received, presented as a percent of the population 25 years or older;
- *Free and Reduced Lunch* – a federally assisted program that provides free or reduced lunches to school children at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. This program is a commonly used proxy for poverty;
- *English Language Learners* – the percent of individuals for whom English is not their primary language and have limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English; and
- *Special Education/Individual Education Plan* – the percent of students identified as having special needs or difficulties learning or functioning in a classroom.

State to State Comparison

The following compares Rhode Island to the five other New England states, and to the national average, on selected demographic measures. Data comes from Census Bureau estimates for 2003 and 2008 and from the National Center for Education Statistics for school years 2002-03 and 2007-08.

Socio-Economic Factors

Population

As shown on Table 15, the majority of New England states, with the exception of New Hampshire, continue to experience slower population growth than the rest of the country. Between 2003 and 2008, the national population increased by 4.8 percent while the population in Rhode Island grew just 1.6 percent. Massachusetts was the only New England state to experience slower population growth than the Ocean State, increasing by 1.2 percent over the five-year period.

Poverty

One commonly used measure of poverty is the federal poverty line (FPL), a statistic based on income thresholds which vary with family size. This measure is the primary qualifier for a number of federally- and state-supported programs including, but not limited to the free and reduced lunch program. In 2008, the federally defined “poverty line” was \$21,834 for a family of four with two dependent children. Nationally, 13.2 percent of the population lived below the poverty threshold in 2008 compared to 12.7 percent in 2003. All of the New England states had lower poverty rates than the national average. In Rhode Island, the share of the population living below the poverty line increased from 11.3 percent in 2003 to 11.7 percent in 2008.

Table 15
Selected Socio-Economic Factors 2003 and 2008
New England and United States Average

| | Total Population (thousands) | | | Poverty Below 100% | | Adult Educational Attainment* | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | 2003 Amount | 2008 Amount | Change | 2003 Percent | 2008 Percent | High School+ | | Bachelor+ | |
| | | | | | | 2003 Percent | 2008 Percent | 2003 Percent | 2008 Percent |
| US | 282,910 | 304,060 | 4.8% | 12.7% | 13.2% | 83.6% | 85.0% | 26.5% | 27.7% |
| Connecticut | 3,371 | 3,501 | 2.2% | 8.1% | 9.3% | 87.6% | 88.6% | 34.6% | 35.6% |
| Maine | 1,271 | 1,316 | 3.5% | 10.5% | 12.3% | 88.3% | 89.7% | 25.9% | 25.4% |
| Massachusetts | 6,219 | 6,498 | 1.2% | 9.4% | 10.0% | 87.7% | 88.7% | 35.8% | 38.1% |
| New Hampshire | 1,252 | 1,316 | 6.0% | 7.7% | 7.6% | 89.4% | 90.9% | 30.3% | 33.3% |
| Rhode Island | 1,037 | 1,051 | 1.6% | 11.3% | 11.7% | 81.6% | 83.7% | 29.1% | 30.0% |
| Vermont | 598 | 621 | 2.0% | 9.7% | 10.6% | 88.6% | 90.6% | 32.0% | 32.1% |

* For the population 25 and older; indicates the highest level of attainment; high school attainment includes degree or equivalent
SOURCE: US Bureau of the Census American Community Survey, various years; RIPEC calculations

Adult Educational Attainment

Research has indicated that the education level of adults in the home has an impact on the educational performance and attainment of students. Consistent with past reports, national data, based on the percent of adults aged 25 and older indicate that Rhode Island lags behind the rest of the country and the region with regard to the percent of adults with at least a high school degree (or equivalent). In 2008, 83.7 percent of Rhode Island adults held at least a high school diploma or equivalent compared to 85.0 percent of the nation. The State out-performs the national average with regard to the percent of adults with at least a bachelor’s degree, with 30.0 percent of Rhode Island adults having attained at least a bachelor’s degree, compared to 27.7 percent nationally, in 2008. However, among the New England states, only Maine has a lower share of adults with at least a college degree.

Student Enrollment

Between the 2002-03 and 2007-08 school years, pre-kindergarten-12 enrollment in Rhode Island public schools declined 7.2 percent compared to an increase of 2.2 percent nationally. During this time period, every New England state experienced a decline in enrollments, ranging from a 7.2 percent in Rhode Island to 0.4 percent in Connecticut.

Table 16
Selected Enrollment, 2002-03 to 2007-08
New England and United States Average

| | Fall Enrollment | | | English Language Learners* | | Special Education** | | Free/Reduced Lunch*** | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | 2002-03 Amount | 2007-08 Amount | Change | 2002-03 Percent | 2007-08 Percent | 2002-03 Percent | 2007-08 Percent | 2002-03 Percent | 2007-08 Percent |
| United States | 48,113,207 | 49,183,404 | 2.2% | 8.5% | 5.2% | 13.4% | 11.9% | 36.5% | 40.5% |
| Connecticut | 572,823 | 570,626 | -0.4% | 4.0% | 5.3% | 12.9% | 12.1% | 25.3% | 29.5% |
| Maine | 209,225 | 196,105 | -6.3% | 1.3% | 2.1% | 16.1% | 16.2% | 29.7% | 35.1% |
| Massachusetts | 982,989 | 962,958 | -2.0% | 5.3% | 5.8% | 15.3% | 17.3% | 26.2% | 29.5% |
| New Hampshire | 207,671 | 200,772 | -3.3% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 14.1% | ND | 15.5% | 18.1% |
| Rhode Island | 159,000 | 147,629 | -7.2% | 6.3% | 4.8% | 20.4% | 19.7% | 33.4% | 37.7% |
| Vermont | 99,978 | 94,038 | -5.9% | 1.1% | 1.5% | 13.8% | 13.7% | 25.5% | 27.4% |

* The number of students served in a language assistance program; ** Students with an individual education plan; *** Students with family incomes < 185% FPL

NOTE: N/D indicates that data was not available for that year; US total includes DC; Enrollment is total public school enrollment, including charters and ungraded students in grades PK-12.

SOURCE: NCES Common Core of Data Survey, various years; RIPEC calculations

English Language Learners

Across the country, the percentage of students classified as English Language Learners (ELL) declined from 8.5 percent in 2002-03 to 5.2 percent in 2007-08. In Rhode Island, the share of students classified as ELL decreased by 1.5 percentage points, from 6.3 to 4.8 percent during this time period. Although Rhode Island had the highest share of ELL students among the New England states in the 2002-03 school year, both Connecticut and Massachusetts had higher ELL enrollments in the 2007-08 school year (5.3 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively).

Individual Education Plan/Special Education

In both years, Rhode Island had a higher percentage of students with an individual education plan (IEP) than the national average and all other New England states. Students with an IEP accounted for 20.4 percent of student enrollment in Rhode Island in 2002-03 and for 19.7 percent of all students in 2007-08. By comparison, IEP students were 11.9 percent of the national student population in 2007-08.

Free/Reduced Lunch

Rhode Island enrollment in the free/reduced lunch (FRL) program increased from 33.4 percent of the student population in 2002-03 to 37.7 percent of the student population in 2007-08, echoing regional and national trends. Maine saw the largest increase in FRL enrollments in New England, from 29.7 percent in the 2002-03 school year to 35.1 percent in the 2007-08 school year. Nationally, FRL enrollments increased from 36.5 percent to 40.5 percent of the student population during this time frame. In both years, FRL enrollment as a share of total enrollment in Rhode Island was lower than the national average, but higher than the five other New England states.

Rhode Island Demographics

This section examines Rhode Island-specific trends and demographics, including total enrollment, English language learners, special education and free/reduced lunch enrollments. Data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education. Total enrollments, English language learners and free/reduced lunch programs are based on a one-day snapshot of enrollments in October, while enrollments in special education are based on December counts. One should note that Rhode Island-specific data will differ from NCES data due to the exclusion of charter and State-run schools, as well as students in pre-Kindergarten programs in the data, both of which are counted by NCES.

Enrollment

Consistent with NCES data, enrollment in Rhode Island public schools continued to decline. Between the 2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, public school enrollment in Rhode Island fell from 151,672 students to 140,960 students, a 7.1 percent decrease. On a percentage basis, Foster experienced the largest decrease in student population; enrollment fell by 21.8 percent during this time period. Barrington was the only district to see an increase in population during this time period; enrollment in the district increased by 2.2 percent over the past five years.

Enrollment declines were greater in the urban core districts, where total enrollment fell by 9.0 percent over the five-year period. Of these five communities, Central Falls experienced the greatest percentage decline (18.1 percent over the past five years) while Providence saw the largest decline in enrollment in absolute terms (a loss of 2,210 students). The urban ring districts saw enrollment drop by 6.2 percent during this time; Warwick experienced the largest decline in both relative and absolute terms (11.2 percent and 1,319 students). Since the 2004-05 school year, enrollment has declined by 4.9 percent in the State's suburban districts, and by 8.0 percent in the emerging suburban districts.

Table 17
Total Enrollment, English Language Learners and Free/Reduced Lunch

| | Total Enrollment | | | | English Language Learners | | | | Special Education | | | | Free/Reduced Lunch | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|--|
| | 2004-05 Amount | 2009-10 Amount | Change Amount | Change Percent | 2004-05 Amount | 2004-05 % of Total | 2009-10 Amount | 2009-10 % of Total | Change Amount | Change Percent | 2004-05 Amount | 2004-05 % of Total | 2009-10 Amount | 2009-10 % of Total | Change Amount | Change Percent | 2004-05 Amount | 2004-05 % of Total | 2009-10 Amount | 2009-10 % of Total | Change Amount | Change Percent | |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | 3,416 | 2,796 | (620) | -18.1% | 770 | 11.4% | 502 | 7.5% | (268) | -34.8% | 978 | 3.2% | 779 | 3.0% | (199) | -20.3% | 2,916 | 5.5% | 2,126 | 3.6% | (790) | -27.1% | |
| Newport | 2,578 | 2,147 | (431) | -16.7% | 73 | 1.1% | 50 | 0.7% | (23) | -31.5% | 708 | 2.3% | 439 | 1.7% | (269) | -38.0% | 1,217 | 2.3% | 1,203 | 2.0% | (14) | -1.2% | |
| Pawtucket | 9,386 | 8,878 | (508) | -5.4% | 761 | 11.3% | 913 | 13.6% | 152 | 20.0% | 1,839 | 6.0% | 1,488 | 5.8% | (351) | -19.1% | 6,149 | 11.7% | 6,687 | 11.4% | 538 | 8.7% | |
| Providence | 26,099 | 23,889 | (2,210) | -8.5% | 3,754 | 55.7% | 3,358 | 50.1% | (396) | -10.5% | 4,790 | 15.5% | 4,540 | 17.7% | (250) | -5.2% | 20,510 | 38.9% | 20,493 | 34.8% | (17) | -0.1% | |
| Woonsocket | 6,652 | 6,102 | (550) | -8.3% | 259 | 3.8% | 330 | 4.9% | 71 | 27.4% | 1,690 | 5.5% | 1,481 | 5.8% | (209) | -12.4% | 4,100 | 7.8% | 4,136 | 7.0% | 36 | 0.9% | |
| Subtotal | 48,131 | 43,812 | (4,319) | -9.0% | 5,617 | 83.4% | 5,153 | 77.0% | (464) | -8.3% | 10,005 | 32.4% | 8,727 | 34.1% | (1,278) | -12.8% | 34,892 | 66.2% | 34,645 | 58.8% | (247) | -0.7% | |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | 11,159 | 10,811 | (348) | -3.1% | 379 | 5.6% | 514 | 7.7% | 135 | 35.6% | 2,352 | 7.6% | 1,699 | 6.6% | (653) | -27.8% | 2,658 | 5.0% | 3,508 | 6.0% | 850 | 32.0% | |
| East Providence | 5,988 | 5,773 | (215) | -3.6% | 142 | 2.1% | 199 | 3.0% | 57 | 40.1% | 1,446 | 4.7% | 1,533 | 6.0% | 87 | 6.0% | 1,995 | 3.8% | 2,433 | 4.1% | 438 | 22.0% | |
| North Providence | 3,468 | 3,291 | (177) | -5.1% | 39 | 0.6% | 71 | 1.1% | 32 | 82.1% | 653 | 2.1% | 570 | 2.2% | (83) | -12.7% | 861 | 1.6% | 1,152 | 2.0% | 291 | 33.8% | |
| Warwick | 11,826 | 10,507 | (1,319) | -11.2% | 52 | 0.8% | 64 | 1.0% | 12 | 23.1% | 2,464 | 8.0% | 2,166 | 8.5% | (298) | -12.1% | 2,628 | 5.0% | 3,079 | 5.2% | 451 | 17.2% | |
| West Warwick | 3,780 | 3,583 | (197) | -5.2% | 55 | 0.8% | 55 | 0.8% | 0 | 0.0% | 900 | 2.9% | 790 | 3.1% | (110) | -12.2% | 1,310 | 2.5% | 1,654 | 2.8% | 344 | 26.3% | |
| Subtotal | 36,221 | 33,965 | (2,256) | -6.2% | 667 | 9.9% | 903 | 13.5% | 236 | 35.4% | 7,815 | 25.3% | 6,758 | 26.4% | (1,057) | -13.5% | 9,452 | 17.9% | 11,826 | 20.1% | 2,374 | 25.1% | |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | 3,388 | 3,463 | 75 | 2.2% | 10 | 0.1% | 23 | 0.3% | 13 | 130.0% | 580 | 1.9% | 443 | 1.7% | (137) | -23.6% | 97 | 0.2% | 140 | 0.2% | 43 | 44.3% | |
| Bristol-Warren | 3,622 | 3,539 | (83) | -2.3% | 108 | 1.6% | 89 | 1.3% | (19) | -17.6% | 679 | 2.2% | 453 | 1.8% | (226) | -33.3% | 883 | 1.7% | 1,140 | 1.9% | 257 | 29.1% | |
| Cumberland | 5,298 | 4,988 | (310) | -5.9% | 79 | 1.2% | 81 | 1.2% | 2 | 2.5% | 1,206 | 3.9% | 906 | 3.5% | (300) | -24.9% | 586 | 1.1% | 980 | 1.7% | 394 | 67.2% | |
| East Greenwich | 2,464 | 2,402 | (62) | -2.5% | 20 | 0.3% | 19 | 0.3% | (1) | -5.0% | 389 | 1.3% | 367 | 1.4% | (22) | -5.7% | 134 | 0.3% | 165 | 0.3% | 31 | 23.1% | |
| Jamestown | 523 | 492 | (31) | -5.9% | 9 | 0.1% | 2 | 0.0% | (7) | -77.8% | 120 | 0.4% | 136 | 0.5% | 16 | 13.3% | 37 | 0.1% | 24 | 0.0% | (13) | -35.1% | |
| Johnston | 3,194 | 3,185 | (9) | -0.3% | 35 | 0.5% | 95 | 1.4% | 60 | 171.4% | 866 | 2.8% | 827 | 3.2% | (39) | -4.5% | 682 | 1.3% | 1,173 | 2.0% | 491 | 72.0% | |
| Lincoln | 3,473 | 3,375 | (98) | -2.8% | 23 | 0.3% | 35 | 0.5% | 12 | 52.2% | 708 | 2.3% | 543 | 2.1% | (165) | -23.3% | 324 | 0.6% | 787 | 1.3% | 463 | 142.9% | |
| Middletown | 2,547 | 2,368 | (179) | -7.0% | 10 | 0.1% | 69 | 1.0% | 59 | 590.0% | 563 | 1.8% | 389 | 1.5% | (174) | -30.9% | 428 | 0.8% | 635 | 1.1% | 207 | 48.4% | |
| Narragansett | 1,632 | 1,477 | (155) | -9.5% | 7 | 0.1% | 2 | 0.0% | (5) | -71.4% | 324 | 1.1% | 249 | 1.0% | (75) | -23.1% | 170 | 0.3% | 206 | 0.3% | 36 | 21.2% | |
| North Kingstown | 4,649 | 4,484 | (165) | -3.5% | 43 | 0.6% | 55 | 0.8% | 12 | 27.9% | 813 | 2.6% | 604 | 2.4% | (209) | -25.7% | 548 | 1.0% | 820 | 1.4% | 272 | 49.6% | |
| Portsmouth | 2,967 | 2,920 | (47) | -1.6% | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 0.1% | 5 | - | 560 | 1.8% | 482 | 1.9% | (78) | -13.9% | 192 | 0.4% | 324 | 0.6% | 132 | 68.8% | |
| Smithfield | 2,663 | 2,165 | (498) | -18.7% | 12 | 0.2% | 5 | 0.1% | (7) | -58.3% | 382 | 1.2% | 292 | 1.1% | (90) | -23.6% | 184 | 0.3% | 256 | 0.4% | 72 | 39.1% | |
| Westerly | 3,528 | 3,137 | (391) | -11.1% | 48 | 0.7% | 77 | 1.1% | 29 | 60.4% | 631 | 2.0% | 605 | 2.4% | (26) | -4.1% | 808 | 1.5% | 969 | 1.6% | 161 | 19.9% | |
| Subtotal | 39,948 | 37,995 | (1,953) | -4.9% | 404 | 6.0% | 557 | 8.3% | 153 | 37.9% | 7,821 | 25.4% | 6,296 | 24.6% | (1,525) | -19.5% | 5,073 | 9.6% | 7,619 | 12.9% | 2,546 | 50.2% | |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | 2,519 | 2,516 | (3) | -0.1% | 3 | 0.0% | 6 | 0.1% | 3 | 100.0% | 555 | 1.8% | 448 | 1.7% | (107) | -19.3% | 477 | 0.9% | 754 | 1.3% | 277 | 58.1% | |
| Chariho | 3,848 | 3,574 | (274) | -7.1% | 8 | 0.1% | 14 | 0.2% | 6 | 75.0% | 635 | 2.1% | 382 | 1.5% | (253) | -39.8% | 510 | 1.0% | 704 | 1.2% | 194 | 38.0% | |
| Coventry | 5,732 | 5,499 | (233) | -4.1% | 11 | 0.2% | 7 | 0.1% | (4) | -36.4% | 1,118 | 3.6% | 889 | 3.5% | (229) | -20.5% | 684 | 1.3% | 1,255 | 2.1% | 571 | 83.5% | |
| Exeter-West Greenwich | 2,138 | 1,886 | (252) | -11.8% | 9 | 0.1% | 22 | 0.3% | 13 | 144.4% | 416 | 1.3% | 297 | 1.2% | (119) | -28.6% | 222 | 0.4% | 236 | 0.4% | 14 | 6.3% | |
| Foster | 330 | 258 | (72) | -21.8% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | - | 39 | 0.1% | 32 | 0.1% | (7) | -17.9% | 53 | 0.1% | 38 | 0.1% | (15) | -28.3% | |
| Foster-Glocester | 1,684 | 1,379 | (305) | -18.1% | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 0.0% | 2 | - | 194 | 0.6% | 122 | 0.5% | (72) | -37.1% | 145 | 0.3% | 188 | 0.3% | 43 | 29.7% | |
| Glocester | 759 | 595 | (164) | -21.6% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | - | 151 | 0.5% | 92 | 0.4% | (59) | -39.1% | 109 | 0.2% | 123 | 0.2% | 14 | 12.8% | |
| Little Compton | 328 | 312 | (16) | -4.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | - | 83 | 0.3% | 60 | 0.2% | (23) | -27.7% | 19 | 0.0% | 10 | 0.0% | (9) | -47.4% | |
| New Shoreham | 132 | 126 | (6) | -4.5% | 5 | 0.1% | 2 | 0.0% | (3) | -60.0% | 21 | 0.1% | 17 | 0.1% | (4) | -19.0% | 11 | 0.0% | 15 | 0.0% | 4 | 36.4% | |
| North Smithfield | 1,868 | 1,829 | (39) | -2.1% | 4 | 0.1% | 15 | 0.2% | 11 | 275.0% | 340 | 1.1% | 319 | 1.2% | (21) | -6.2% | 158 | 0.3% | 249 | 0.4% | 91 | 57.6% | |
| Scituate | 1,810 | 1,655 | (155) | -8.6% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | - | 300 | 1.0% | 200 | 0.8% | (100) | -33.3% | 113 | 0.2% | 197 | 0.3% | 84 | 74.3% | |
| South Kingstown | 4,048 | 3,590 | (458) | -11.3% | 9 | 0.1% | 15 | 0.2% | 6 | 66.7% | 859 | 2.8% | 572 | 2.2% | (287) | -33.4% | 438 | 0.8% | 590 | 1.0% | 152 | 34.7% | |
| Tiverton | 2,176 | 1,969 | (207) | -9.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | - | 487 | 1.6% | 402 | 1.6% | (85) | -17.5% | 344 | 0.7% | 431 | 0.7% | 87 | 25.3% | |
| Subtotal | 27,372 | 25,188 | (2,184) | -8.0% | 49 | 0.7% | 83 | 1.2% | 34 | 69.4% | 5,198 | 16.9% | 3,832 | 15.0% | (1,366) | -26.3% | 3,283 | 6.2% | 4,790 | 8.1% | 1,507 | 45.9% | |
| Total | 151,672 | 140,960 | (10,712) | -7.1% | 6,737 | 4.4% | 6,696 | 4.8% | (41) | -0.6% | 30,839 | 20.3% | 25,613 | 18.2% | (5,226) | -16.9% | 52,700 | 34.7% | 58,880 | 41.8% | 6,180 | 11.7% | |

Enrollments are based on October 1 counts except for Special Education, which relies on December counts
Source: RI Dept of Education and RIPEC calculations.

English Language Learners

Based on data from the Rhode Island Department of Education, 6,729 students were enrolled in English language learner (ELL) programs in the 2004-05 school year, and 6,607 students were enrolled as of October 1, 2009. Over the past five years, ELL enrollment has declined by 41 students, or 0.6 percent. At the same time, due to declines in total enrollment, ELL students constitute a slightly larger share of total statewide enrollment in the 2009-10 school year.

The majority – 77.0 percent – of ELL students are in one of the five urban core cities. When the urban ring districts are included, urban districts account for approximately 90 percent of all ELL enrollments in the State in the current school year. As a share of district population, ELL students accounted for 11.8 percent of all students in the urban core districts, 2.7 percent of enrollment in the urban ring districts, 1.5 percent on enrollment in the suburban districts, and 0.3 percent in the State’s emerging suburban districts. With the exception of Woonsocket, all urban core districts saw a decline in ELL enrollments, while there was a net increase in the urban ring, suburban and emerging suburban districts.

Special Education

Students with an individualized education plan (IEP) accounted for 18.2 percent of total enrollment in the 2009-10 school year, compared to 20.3 percent in the 2004-05 school year. Over the five-year period, IEP enrollments declined by 16.9 percent, over double the rate of decline in total statewide enrollment of 7.1 percent. With the exception of East Providence and Jamestown, all Rhode Island districts saw a decline in IEP enrollments over the past five years.

Although most (60.5 percent) students with an IEP are in one of the State’s ten urban districts, urban IEP enrollments as a share of student population are only slightly higher than across the rest of the State (19.9 percent, compared to 16.6 percent in the suburban districts and 15.2 percent in the emerging suburban districts). In four districts, Central Falls, East Providence, Johnston and Jamestown, IEP enrollments accounted for over one-quarter of the student population.

Free/Reduced Lunch

In contrast to both ELL and IEP enrollments, the number of students participating in the free/reduced lunch (FRL) program has increased over the past five years. In the 2004-05 school year there were 52,700 students who were enrolled in the FRL program, compared to 58,880 in the 2009-10 school year. This represents an increase of 6,180, or 11.7 percent, in the five-year time period. There was a net decline in FRL enrollments in the urban core districts (Pawtucket and Woonsocket, however, saw increases in program participation), while the other three designations saw increases ranging from 25.1 percent in the urban ring to 50.2 percent in the suburban districts.

Although the ten urban districts account for roughly 55 percent of total 2009-10 enrollment in the State, 78.9 percent of students in the FRL program attend school in one of the districts. Notably, 34.8 percent of all FRL students statewide were enrolled in Providence, which accounts for 17.0 percent of total student enrollment. As a share of enrollment, 79.1 percent of the student population in the urban core districts is enrolled in the FRL program, while 34.8 percent of students in the urban ring districts are participating in the program. Free/reduced lunch students in the suburban and emerging suburban districts account for 20.1 percent and 19.0 percent of the student population, respectively.

School Revenues

Highlights

State to State Comparison

- In FY 2007, local resources supported 43.9 percent of education funding nationwide while state resources accounted for 47.6 percent of education revenues. Since FY 1997, both the local and state portion of education funding have declined slightly as Federal resources have increased.
- In general, New England relies more on local sources to fund education than the rest of the country. In both FY 1997 and FY 2007, all of the states in the region (with the exception of Vermont) were above the national average for local support and were lower than the national average for state support.
- Rhode Island ranked 12th highest in the country for the share of education revenues supported by local sources in FY 2007. Although the share of local support has declined since FY 1997, the State rose in the national rankings (from 14th highest).
- The State share of education revenues in Rhode Island was approximately 40 percent in both FY 1997 and FY 2007; the State ranked 40th in 2007.

Rhode Island District Comparison

- Between FY 2000 and FY 2008, total education revenues in Rhode Island increased from \$1,333.4 million to \$1,989.5 million, or by 49.2 percent. Local sources accounted for 61.0 percent of the growth during this time.
- The second-largest share of growth was in state sources (excluding direct charter school aid, construction aid and the State contribution for teacher retirement), which increased \$179.7 million to \$694.9 million in FY 2008; however the state share of total revenues declined 3.7 percent, from 38.6 percent to 34.9 percent of total education resources.
- In FY 2008, local revenues accounted for 58 cents of every dollar dedicated to education statewide, State sources accounted for 35 cents of every education dollar and federal support was 7 cents of every dollar.
- The mix of revenues used to support education varies depending, in part, on local capacity and need. In general, the urban core districts receive more support from the State and Federal governments than the rest of State. On average, local revenues account for 29.8 percent of urban core revenues, compared to 71.1 percent across the rest of the State.
- Similarly, state sources account for a smaller portion of funding in the non-urban districts, ranging from 58.3 percent of education revenues in the urban core to 18.9 percent of revenues in the suburban districts.
- When Central Falls and New Shoreham are excluded, local support was the lowest in Woonsocket (19.7 percent of total revenues and the highest in Jamestown (92.8 percent of total revenues).
- Between FY 2000 and the FY 2010 Enacted Budget, state aid increased by \$114.6 million, or 22.2 percent. On a per pupil basis, state aid increased by \$1,151 per pupil, or by 34.7 percent during this time.

Overview

The source of education funding is an integral component of the on-going debate about public education in the United States. Central to the debate are questions of “equity” and “adequacy”, and what those terms mean with regard to the provision of education. States around the country are working to define systems of education finance that address local funding disparities and incorporate the notion of adequacy. Frequently these efforts are brought about as the result of legal action brought on the behalf of poorer communities in a state.

Education funding across the country comes from three primary sources: local (often the property tax), state, and Federal. The extent to which a state or community relies on each source of funding depends primarily on their specific demographic makeup, and, to an extent, community preference for education spending. In some states, Vermont for example, the majority of education is funded through the State and through redistribution of tax revenue from wealthy communities to poorer communities. Education in Hawaii, which does not allow municipalities to levy a local property tax, is almost exclusively supported through State and Federal spending.

Rhode Island has not had a predictable school aid formula since the mid 1990s and is the only state in the country without a formula. Up until FY 1996, the State used a statutory formula to distribute education aid. After FY 1996, aid was determined on a year-by-year basis, with additional aid targeted to districts with a high tax effort and low tax capacity, and those with a high number of disadvantaged students. Since FY 2007, State education aid has been frozen (with minor adjustments) due to Rhode Island’s current fiscal strain. In the proposed FY 2010 Supplemental Budget, education aid is cut by 3.0 percent, across-the-board and some of the decrease is filled with additional stimulus funds. The proposed FY 2011 Budget also cuts education aid, by 3.8 percent compared to the FY 2010 Enacted budget. These changes will be discussed in the expenditures section of this report.

For over a decade, policymakers have worked to develop and enact an education funding formula that insures school students, school districts and taxpayers, adequacy, predictability and fairness. A number of formulas have been proposed but, to date, no action has been taken. Recently, the Department of Education has put forward a funding formula for consideration.

This section presents a summary and analysis of how Rhode Island finances its public elementary and secondary schools. It explores the resources derived from local, State and Federal sources in Rhode Island, both in comparison to the other New England states and the United States average, and across Rhode Island districts. Nationally comparable data is for the 1996-97 (FY 1997) and 2006-07 (FY 2007) school years and was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics. Rhode Island-specific data, including fall enrollment and source and total of revenues, is from the Rhode Island Department of Education, while total State aid calculations were made using data from the House Fiscal Advisory Staff publication “Budget as Enacted” for FY 2000 and FY 2010.

State to State Comparison

Education funding comes from three primary sources: local funds (principally property taxes), state aid, and federal funds. Both state and federal revenues comprise a variety of programs that range from funds to support professional development to those targeted towards economically disadvantaged districts. Nationally, in FY 2007, local resources supported 43.9 percent of education funding while state resources accounted for 47.6 percent of education revenues. Federal resources constituted the remaining 8.5 percent of revenues. Since FY 1997, both the local and state portion of education funding have declined slightly as federal resources have increased. One should note that these figures do not reflect the additional funding that was made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which represented a significant infusion of federal funds into elementary and secondary education.

Table 18
Source of Total Public School Revenue

| | 1996-97 | | | | | | 2006-07 | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | Local | | State | | Federal | | Local | | State | | Federal | |
| | Percent | Rank | Percent | Rank | Percent | Rank | Percent | Rank | Percent | Rank | Percent | Rank |
| U.S. Average* | 45.4% | - | 48.0% | - | 6.6% | - | 43.9% | - | 47.6% | - | 8.5% | - |
| Connecticut | 59.4% | 7 | 37.1% | 43 | 3.5% | 49 | 56.6% | 6 | 38.8% | 41 | 4.6% | 49 |
| Maine | 47.8% | 19 | 46.8% | 30 | 5.4% | 36 | 45.6% | 24 | 45.2% | 28 | 9.1% | 23 |
| Massachusetts | 55.3% | 11 | 39.9% | 38 | 4.8% | 42 | 47.8% | 19 | 46.8% | 26 | 5.4% | 48 |
| New Hampshire | 89.2% | 1 | 7.4% | 50 | 3.5% | 50 | 57.0% | 5 | 37.5% | 43 | 5.5% | 47 |
| Rhode Island | 54.0% | 14 | 40.6% | 35 | 5.4% | 37 | 51.6% | 12 | 40.3% | 40 | 8.1% | 30 |
| Vermont | 66.7% | 2 | 28.6% | 48 | 4.6% | 43 | 7.3% | 49 | 85.9% | 2 | 6.7% | 41 |

*US average includes District of Columbia
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Data Set; RIPEC calculations

In general, New England relies more on local sources to fund education than the rest of the country. In both FY 1997 and FY 2007, all of the states in the region (with the exception of Vermont) were above the national average for local support and were lower than the national average for state support. As is the trend in the rest of the country, New England states are relying less on local revenues to fund education than in the past; however, for most states in the region, this is a reflection of increased federal spending rather than an increase in state support.

Rhode Island ranked 14th highest in the country for the share of education revenues supported by local sources in FY 1997. Although the local share declined from 54.0 percent in FY 1997 to 51.6 percent in FY 2007, the Ocean State rose in the national rankings to 12th highest in the country. Conversely, the State moved from 35th highest in FY 1997 to 40th highest in FY 2007 in the country for state support even though the State's share remained almost the same. Within the region, Connecticut and New Hampshire continue to rely more on local sources for education revenues than does Rhode Island, and both received slightly less state support than Rhode Island. New England tends to receive less in Federal support than does the rest of the country. Almost all New England states ranked in the bottom half of the states for the portion of education revenues from the Federal government and only Maine received federal support above the national average in FY 2007.

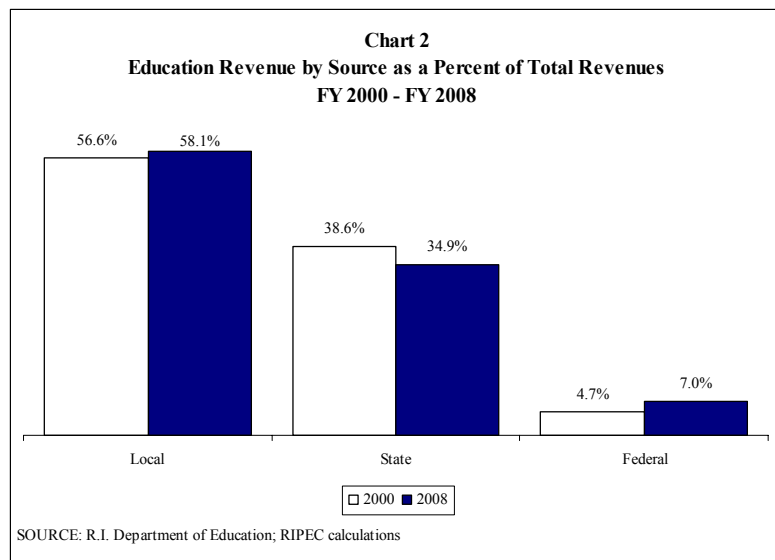
Rhode Island Revenues – Statewide

Revenues by District

Funding for education in Rhode Island comes from a number of different sources. The primary means of support for most districts is local revenues (primarily property tax revenue). The second largest category of aid is State support, which comprises aid distributed to municipalities directly and indirectly. In addition, the State provides funds for teacher retirement and school construction. The final component of education aid is Federal sources, which is composed of, among other things, Title 1 educational funding, IDEA support, and funds for national school breakfast and school lunch programs. It should be noted that the figures in this section will differ from NCES reports due to methodological differences in reporting between NCES and RIDE.

Revenue by Source

Between FY 2000 and FY 2008, total education revenues in Rhode Island increased from \$1,333.4 million to \$1,989.5 million, or by 53.0 percent. The largest share of this increase was growth in local sources, which increased from \$754.9 million in FY 2000 to \$1,155.2 million in FY 2008 and accounted for 61.0 percent of total growth over the eight-year period. As a share of total revenues, local revenues increased from 56.6 percent to 58.1 percent during this time period.



The second-largest share of growth was in state sources (excluding direct charter school aid, construction aid and the State contribution for teacher retirement), which increased \$179.7 million to \$694.9 million in FY 2008. Despite growing almost 35 percent between FY 2000 and FY 2008, the state share of total revenues declined 3.7 percent, from 38.6 percent to 34.9 percent of total education resources. Although federal revenues accounted for just 11.6 percent of the total growth during the time period, they more than doubled over the eight years, from \$63.2 million in FY 2000 to \$139.4 million in FY 2008. The federal share of education revenues has also increased, from 4.7 percent of total revenues in FY 2000 to 6.9 percent in FY 2008.

The extent to which communities rely on local, state and federal sources varies across the State and is related to district need and capacity. The urban core districts, in general, have a higher level of State support than local support, while the reverse is true across the rest of the State. In FY 2008, 29.8 percent of total school revenues came from local sources in the State's urban core districts, compared to 66.0 percent in the urban ring districts, 76.5 percent in the suburban districts, and 70.0 percent in the emerging suburban districts. One should note, however, that Central Falls is almost entirely funded by the State. When Central Falls is excluded, 32.4 percent of urban education funding is locally supported.

Table 19
FY 2008 Revenues by Source of Funding (\$ thousands)

| Districts | Source of Funding | | | | Percent of Total | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Local | State** | Federal | Total | Local | State** | Federal |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | \$206 | \$44,347 | \$5,776 | \$50,330 | 0.4% | 88.1% | 11.5% |
| Newport | 24,659 | 11,926 | 4,882 | 41,467 | 59.5% | 28.8% | 11.8% |
| Pawtucket | 27,662 | 67,465 | 11,660 | 106,787 | 25.9% | 63.2% | 10.9% |
| Providence | 120,882 | 194,887 | 42,944 | 358,713 | 33.7% | 54.3% | 12.0% |
| Woonsocket | 14,185 | 48,033 | 9,802 | 72,020 | 19.7% | 66.7% | 13.6% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | \$187,594 | \$366,658 | \$75,065 | \$629,317 | 29.8% | 58.3% | 11.9% |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | \$90,610 | \$35,749 | \$9,433 | \$135,792 | 66.7% | 26.3% | 6.9% |
| East Providence | 43,055 | 27,246 | 4,964 | 75,264 | 57.2% | 36.2% | 6.6% |
| North Providence | 30,135 | 13,386 | 1,847 | 45,368 | 66.4% | 29.5% | 4.1% |
| Warwick | 119,661 | 37,678 | 7,491 | 164,831 | 72.6% | 22.9% | 4.5% |
| West Warwick | 30,064 | 20,556 | 3,088 | 53,708 | 56.0% | 38.3% | 5.7% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | \$313,526 | \$134,614 | \$26,823 | \$474,963 | 66.0% | 28.3% | 5.6% |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | \$35,624 | \$2,602 | \$1,225 | \$39,451 | 90.3% | 6.6% | 3.1% |
| Bristol-Warren | 30,068 | 20,554 | 3,614 | 54,237 | 55.4% | 37.9% | 6.7% |
| Cumberland | 36,172 | 13,379 | 1,914 | 51,464 | 70.3% | 26.0% | 3.7% |
| East Greenwich | 30,956 | 1,960 | 1,058 | 33,974 | 91.1% | 5.8% | 3.1% |
| Jamestown | 10,859 | 535 | 306 | 11,700 | 92.8% | 4.6% | 2.6% |
| Johnston | 39,296 | 10,929 | 2,424 | 52,649 | 74.6% | 20.8% | 4.6% |
| Lincoln | 38,785 | 7,403 | 2,102 | 48,290 | 80.3% | 15.3% | 4.4% |
| Middletown | 21,779 | 10,540 | 3,095 | 35,414 | 61.5% | 29.8% | 8.7% |
| Narragansett | 25,070 | 1,948 | 1,055 | 28,072 | 89.3% | 6.9% | 3.8% |
| North Kingstown | 44,763 | 12,069 | 2,793 | 59,625 | 75.1% | 20.2% | 4.7% |
| Portsmouth | 26,620 | 6,707 | 1,716 | 35,043 | 76.0% | 19.1% | 4.9% |
| Smithfield | 26,095 | 5,761 | 1,127 | 32,983 | 79.1% | 17.5% | 3.4% |
| Westerly | 42,782 | 6,870 | 2,183 | 51,836 | 82.5% | 13.3% | 4.2% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | \$408,870 | \$101,257 | \$24,611 | \$534,739 | 76.5% | 18.9% | 4.6% |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | \$14,798 | \$13,855 | \$1,239 | \$29,892 | 49.5% | 46.4% | 4.1% |
| Chariho* | 38,271 | 14,898 | 1,781 | 54,950 | 69.6% | 27.1% | 3.2% |
| Coventry | 41,883 | 20,109 | 3,214 | 65,206 | 64.2% | 30.8% | 4.9% |
| Exeter-West Greenwich | 21,179 | 7,661 | 934 | 29,774 | 71.1% | 25.7% | 3.1% |
| Foster | 2,939 | 1,416 | 156 | 4,512 | 65.1% | 31.4% | 3.5% |
| Foster-Glocester | 11,290 | 5,730 | 589 | 17,609 | 64.1% | 32.5% | 3.3% |
| Glocester | 6,549 | 3,219 | 413 | 10,180 | 64.3% | 31.6% | 4.1% |
| Little Compton | 5,757 | 369 | 139 | 6,265 | 91.9% | 5.9% | 2.2% |
| New Shoreham | 3,920 | 106 | 78 | 4,104 | 95.5% | 2.6% | 1.9% |
| North Smithfield | 15,734 | 4,837 | 597 | 21,167 | 74.3% | 22.9% | 2.8% |
| Scituate | 17,311 | 3,471 | 811 | 21,593 | 80.2% | 16.1% | 3.8% |
| South Kingstown | 46,197 | 10,775 | 2,141 | 59,113 | 78.2% | 18.2% | 3.6% |
| Tiverton | 19,382 | 5,936 | 814 | 26,133 | 74.2% | 22.7% | 3.1% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | \$245,210 | \$92,383 | \$12,906 | \$350,498 | 70.0% | 26.4% | 3.7% |
| Statewide | \$1,155,200 | \$694,913 | \$139,405 | \$1,989,518 | 58.1% | 34.9% | 7.0% |

* Chariho School District's State Aid represents Charlestown, Hopkinton and Richmond

**Includes direct State aid and is exclusive of set-aside funds, including direct charter school aid, the State contribution to teacher retirement, and construction aid. Totals are exclusive of food service

SOURCE: R.I. Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

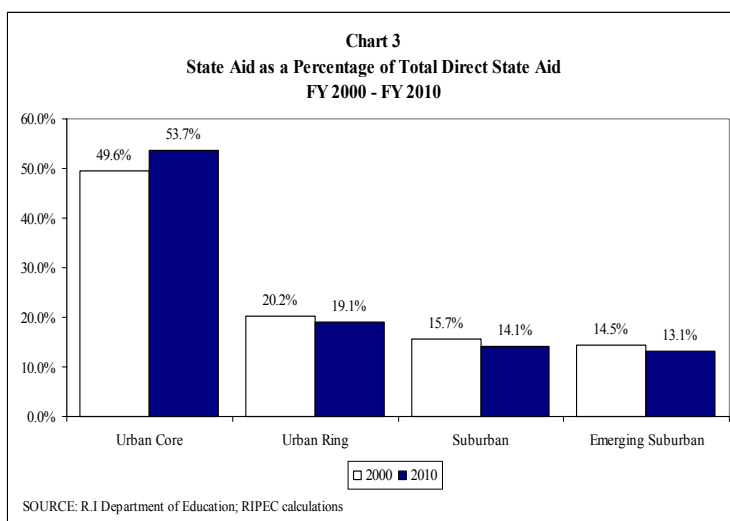
Similarly, state sources account for a smaller portion of funding in the non-urban districts, ranging from 58.3 percent of education revenues in the urban core to 18.9 percent of revenues in the suburban districts. Federal revenues account for a relatively small share of education resources and averaged 7.0 percent of all education revenues across the State in FY 2008. As with State revenues, federal revenues tend to account for the greatest share of education budgets in the State’s urban core areas.

In FY 2008, local revenues ranged from a low of 19.7 percent of education revenues in Woonsocket to a high of 92.8 percent in Jamestown (note: because of their unique characteristics, Central Falls and New Shoreham are excluded from this analysis). Conversely, state aid accounted for the largest share of revenues in Woonsocket, and the smallest share of revenues in Jamestown (66.7 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively).

State Aid

State support includes: aid directly distributed to individual municipalities (including State funding for the Central Falls School District); non-distributed aid for categories such as professional development, progressive support and intervention; and aid to charter schools. State aid, as discussed on the following pages, considers only direct aid to municipalities and does not include set-aside funds such as direct charter school aid, funds for progressive support and intervention, or professional development. State aid also is exclusive of the State share of teacher retirement and construction aid. Proposed changes to state aid are included in the expenditures section of this report.

The majority of state education aid is distributed to the urban core districts, and this share has increased since FY 2000. State aid to urban core districts accounted for 53.7 percent of all distributed aid, compared to 19.1 percent for the urban ring districts, 14.1 percent for suburban districts and 13.1 percent for the emerging suburban districts. One should note that the share of state aid reflects both the share of enrollment (the five urban core districts account for 31.0 percent of enrollment), and student need (almost 60 percent of free/reduced lunch enrollment, 78 percent of limited English proficiency enrollment and 34 percent of special education enrollment is within the urban core districts).



Between FY 2000 and the FY 2010 Enacted Budget, state aid increased by \$114.6 million, or 22.2 percent. On a per pupil basis, state aid increased by \$1,151 per pupil, or by 34.7 percent during this time. The urban core districts saw the largest share of the increase during this time; state aid to urban core districts increased by 32.3 percent overall and by 49.0 percent per pupil. Suburban districts saw the smallest increase in state aid, which grew by 9.5 percent overall and by 17.8 percent per pupil.

Table 20
Enacted Direct State Education Aid By District*
FY 2000 - FY 2010

| School District | Total Aid (\$ thousands) | | | | Per Pupil Aid | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | FY 2000 | FY 2010** | Change | Percent | 2000 | 2010** | Change | Percent |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | \$27,269 | \$42,507 | \$15,238 | 55.9% | \$8,121 | \$15,203 | \$7,082 | 87.2% |
| Newport | 8,784 | 10,745 | 1,961 | 22.3% | 2,962 | 5,005 | 2,042 | 68.9% |
| Pawtucket | 46,932 | 62,177 | 15,245 | 32.5% | 4,739 | 7,003 | 2,265 | 47.8% |
| Providence | 136,401 | 178,310 | 41,909 | 30.7% | 5,161 | 7,464 | 2,303 | 44.6% |
| Woonsocket | 35,862 | 44,075 | 8,213 | 22.9% | 5,377 | 7,223 | 1,846 | 34.3% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>\$255,247</i> | <i>\$337,813</i> | <i>\$82,566</i> | <i>32.3%</i> | <i>\$5,175</i> | <i>\$7,711</i> | <i>\$2,536</i> | <i>49.0%</i> |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | \$27,047 | \$31,662 | \$4,616 | 17.1% | \$2,476 | \$2,929 | \$453 | 18.3% |
| East Providence | 20,718 | 24,500 | 3,782 | 18.3% | 3,128 | 4,244 | 1,116 | 35.7% |
| North Providence | 10,292 | 12,082 | 1,789 | 17.4% | 2,926 | 3,671 | 746 | 25.5% |
| Warwick | 30,818 | 33,469 | 2,651 | 8.6% | 2,513 | 3,185 | 673 | 26.8% |
| West Warwick | 15,285 | 18,738 | 3,453 | 22.6% | 4,021 | 5,230 | 1,208 | 30.1% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>\$104,159</i> | <i>\$120,451</i> | <i>\$16,291</i> | <i>15.6%</i> | <i>\$2,805</i> | <i>\$3,546</i> | <i>\$741</i> | <i>26.4%</i> |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | \$2,065 | \$1,863 | -\$202 | -9.8% | \$649 | \$538 | -\$111 | -17.1% |
| Bristol-Warren | 16,917 | 18,764 | 1,847 | 10.9% | 4,320 | 5,302 | 982 | 22.7% |
| Cumberland | 10,873 | 11,829 | 956 | 8.8% | 2,117 | 2,371 | 254 | 12.0% |
| East Greenwich | 1,460 | 1,504 | 44 | 3.0% | 615 | 626 | 11 | 1.8% |
| Jamestown | 391 | 399 | 8 | 2.0% | 594 | 811 | 216 | 36.4% |
| Johnston | 8,343 | 9,597 | 1,253 | 15.0% | 2,368 | 3,013 | 646 | 27.3% |
| Lincoln | 6,137 | 6,364 | 227 | 3.7% | 1,658 | 1,886 | 228 | 13.7% |
| Middletown | 8,353 | 9,533 | 1,180 | 14.1% | 2,948 | 4,026 | 1,077 | 36.5% |
| Narragansett | 1,399 | 1,467 | 68 | 4.9% | 775 | 993 | 218 | 28.1% |
| North Kingstown | 9,979 | 10,631 | 652 | 6.5% | 2,216 | 2,371 | 155 | 7.0% |
| Portsmouth | 5,094 | 5,923 | 829 | 16.3% | 1,772 | 2,028 | 256 | 14.5% |
| Smithfield | 4,532 | 4,993 | 461 | 10.2% | 1,650 | 2,306 | 656 | 39.8% |
| Westerly | 5,393 | 5,775 | 382 | 7.1% | 1,496 | 1,841 | 345 | 23.1% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>\$80,936</i> | <i>\$88,642</i> | <i>\$7,706</i> | <i>9.5%</i> | <i>\$1,981</i> | <i>\$2,333</i> | <i>\$352</i> | <i>17.8%</i> |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | \$10,784 | \$12,928 | \$2,145 | 19.9% | \$3,764 | \$5,138 | \$1,374 | 36.5% |
| Chariho*** | 12,288 | 13,406 | 1,119 | 9.1% | 3,107 | 3,751 | 644 | 20.7% |
| Coventry | 16,657 | 18,057 | 1,400 | 8.4% | 2,980 | 3,284 | 303 | 10.2% |
| Exeter-West Greenwich | 6,066 | 6,814 | 748 | 12.3% | 2,942 | 3,613 | 671 | 22.8% |
| Foster | 1,157 | 1,287 | 129 | 11.2% | 2,837 | 4,987 | 2,150 | 75.8% |
| Foster-Glocester | 4,761 | 5,195 | 434 | 9.1% | 3,002 | 3,767 | 765 | 25.5% |
| Glocester | 2,642 | 2,928 | 286 | 10.8% | 3,109 | 4,921 | 1,812 | 58.3% |
| Little Compton | 274 | 297 | 22 | 8.1% | 789 | 951 | 162 | 20.5% |
| New Shoreham | 59 | 65 | 6 | 10.1% | 469 | 516 | 47 | 10.1% |
| North Smithfield | 3,875 | 4,344 | 470 | 12.1% | 2,130 | 2,375 | 245 | 11.5% |
| Scituate | 2,816 | 2,926 | 110 | 3.9% | 1,609 | 1,768 | 159 | 9.9% |
| South Kingstown | 8,468 | 9,224 | 756 | 8.9% | 1,932 | 2,569 | 637 | 33.0% |
| Tiverton | 4,899 | 5,272 | 373 | 7.6% | 2,133 | 2,677 | 545 | 25.5% |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>\$74,746</i> | <i>\$82,743</i> | <i>\$7,997</i> | <i>10.7%</i> | <i>\$2,666</i> | <i>\$3,285</i> | <i>\$619</i> | <i>23.2%</i> |
| State | \$515,088 | \$629,649 | \$114,561 | 22.2% | \$3,316 | \$4,467 | \$1,151 | 34.7% |

* Excludes Charter Schools, State-run schools, teacher retirement and construction aid. These funds DO NOT include additional Title I or IDEA Part B funds from the ARRA.

** Represents enacted FY 2010 aid and does not include the proposed 3.0 percent across-the-board cut proposed in the FY 2010S budget.

*** Chariho School District's State Aid represents the combined allocation for Charlestown, Hopkinton and Richmond.

Source: R.I. Dept. of Education, House Fiscal Advisory Staff Report, and RIPEC calculations.

School Expenditures

Highlights

State to State Comparison

- Based on data for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Rhode Island ranked 5th highest in the country for per pupil spending with expenditures of \$13,453 in FY 2007, the most recent year for which data is available. Nationally, FY 2007 per pupil expenditures were \$9,703.
- When education expenditures were measured as a share of personal income, Rhode Island's expenditures of \$49.57 per \$1,000 of personal income were 9th highest in the country in 2007 and were 17.6 percent higher than the national average of \$42.16.
- Together, salaries and benefits accounted for 82.5 percent of all education expenditures in FY 2007, compared to 80.4 percent nationally. Although salaries as a part of total expenditures were less in the Ocean State compared to the rest of the country, benefit costs accounted for 4.3 percent more of education budgets in Rhode Island than in the nation as a whole.
- In both FY 1997 and FY 2007, Rhode Island's instructional staff salaries and benefits per pupil were approximately 40 percent higher than the national average but were in line with most other New England states.

Rhode Island District Comparison

- Based on RIPEC projections, total education expenditures in Rhode Island are projected to increase to \$2.6 billion by FY 2015, an increase of approximately 86 percent since FY 2000.
- Per pupil education expenditures are expected to increase to \$20,408 in FY 2015, reflecting growth of roughly 125 percent since FY 2000, when per pupil education expenditures totaled \$9,086.
- Total education expenditures are anticipated to increase from \$1,411.6 million in FY 2000 to \$2,275.8 million in FY 2010, an increase of 61.2 percent. The largest portion of this increase is for general education expenditures, which are projected to grow by \$540.0 million, or 62.5 percent of the total growth in spending over the eight-year time period.
- Special education expenditures are projected to increase 89.9 percent, from \$266.3 million in FY 2000 to \$505.7 million in FY 2010, accounting for 27.7 percent of total growth during the ten-year time frame.
- Expenditures for students in ELL programs in FY 2010 are projected to increase by \$2.2 million, or 7.2 percent, over FY 2000 spending. Total projected FY 2010 ELL spending is \$33.1 million.
- On a per pupil basis, total FY 2010 expenditures are projected to be \$15,514, compared to FY 2000 per pupil expenditures of \$9,086.
- During this time period, per pupil special education expenditures are projected to increase by 119.3 percent to \$19,023 per pupil while ELL-related spending per pupil is projected to increase 64.4 percent to \$4,971 per pupil.

Overview

One of the most contentious aspects in the debate over public education is how much money is spent and how it is allocated. Expenditures on education represent the most significant investment of resources by state and local governments across the country and are the largest component of State aid to local governments in Rhode Island. In the FY 2010 budget, enacted total education aid (including state fiscal stabilization funds through ARRA) is \$855.5 million, or 28.5 percent of the FY 2010 general revenue expenditure budget. At the local level, education spending, on average, accounts for over half of all municipal expenditures.

The high costs associated with the provision of education have led to increased calls for accountability measures designed to ensure that taxpayers are getting results for their investments. An important first step in ensuring accountability is to have accurate and comparable information with regard to how these resources are being used. Rhode Island is currently finalizing the implementation of the Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA), which will help track education expenditures more accurately. This section compares Rhode Island's education expenditures, using a number of different measures, to those throughout New England. It also compares expenditures across Rhode Island at a district level in order to provide an overview of how much Rhode Island is spending on public elementary and secondary education, and where those resources are going.

When comparing education expenditures it is important to keep in mind that different districts will have different costs, due to their individual demographic, economic and geographic composition. Districts with higher concentrations of special education or limited English proficiency students will naturally have higher costs than districts with fewer high-need students. Similarly, districts with more experienced teachers will necessarily have higher costs for instructional staff than districts with less experienced teachers. With the above considerations in mind, however, a comparison of education expenditures across the region and within Rhode Island can provide a starting point for discussions regarding education finance and accountability.

Expenditure information contained in this section includes:

- *Education Expenditures per Pupil* – total education expenditures (based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics) divided by the number of students using fall enrollment for the student count to provide a yardstick for inter-state comparisons;
- *Education Expenditures per \$1,000 of Personal Income* – a measure of the affordability of education spending, calculated by dividing total education expenditures by personal income;
- *Expenditures by Category* – NCES data for six major categories of expenditures: salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies, tuition and other;
- *Expenditure Trends* – examines education expenditure trends since FY 1990 and projects total education spending and the State share through 2010 and a discussion of changes in the FY 2010 supplemental and FY 2011 proposed budget; and
- *Expenditures by Program* – statewide data show how different communities in the State allocate resources to different educational programs, including general education, limited English programs and special education.

State-to-State Comparison

The following section compares Rhode Island's education expenditures to the five other New England states and the national average. Data is from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core Data Set (CCD) for school years 1996-97 and 2006-07 (fiscal years 1997 and 2007), the most recent year for which national data are available.

Expenditures per Pupil

In order to account for significant differences in population across the country, education expenditures are often reported on a per pupil basis. Total enrollment includes all students reported by a district to the NCES. Expenditures include instruction, support services, non-instructional services, and direction program support, and exclude spending for non-public schools, equipment, school construction, debt financing, and community service.

| | FY 1997 | | | FY 2007 | | | Change 1997-2007 | |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| | Amount | % of US | Rank | Amount | % of US | Rank | Amount | Percent |
| U.S. Average* | \$5,905 | - | - | \$9,703 | - | - | \$3,798 | 64.3% |
| Connecticut | \$8,604 | 145.7% | 2 | \$13,664 | 140.8% | 3 | \$5,059 | 58.8% |
| Maine | 6,429 | 108.9% | 13 | 11,644 | 120.0% | 11 | 5,215 | 81.1% |
| Massachusetts | 7,313 | 123.8% | 6 | 12,857 | 132.5% | 7 | 5,544 | 75.8% |
| New Hampshire | 5,733 | 97.1% | 23 | 11,037 | 113.8% | 13 | 5,304 | 92.5% |
| Rhode Island | 7,612 | 128.9% | 5 | 13,453 | 138.6% | 5 | 5,841 | 76.7% |
| Vermont | 6,781 | 114.8% | 11 | 13,629 | 140.5% | 4 | 6,848 | 101.0% |

*US average includes District of Columbia
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Data Set; RIPEC calculations

As shown on Table 21, Rhode Island's total education expenditures in FY 2007 totaled \$13,453 per pupil, ranking the Ocean State 5th highest in the country. Nationally, per pupil education expenditures were \$9,703 in FY 2007. All six New England states outspent the national average in FY 2007; per

pupil education expenditures in FY 2007 ranged from 13.8 percent above the national average in New Hampshire to 40.8 percent above the national average in Connecticut. Rhode Island's FY 2007 per pupil education expenditures were 38.6 percent higher than the US average.

All of the New England states saw a larger absolute increase and, with the exception of Connecticut, a faster rate of growth in per pupil education expenditures compared to the nation as a whole. Between FY 1997 and FY 2007, education spending in Rhode Island increased \$5,841, or 76.7 percent compared to a national average increase of \$3,798, or 64.3 percent. Of the six New England states, Connecticut experienced the slowest rate of growth (58.8 percent) while Vermont saw the fastest increase in per pupil spending (101.0 percent).

Expenditures per \$1,000 of Personal Income

Another way to compare education expenditures is by examining State and local education spending per \$1,000 of personal income, outlined on Table 22. This provides a measure of the relative affordability of education in each state, using personal income as a benchmark. Under this measure the Ocean State ranked 9th highest in the country in FY 2007, with elementary and secondary education expenditures of \$49.57 per \$1,000 of personal income compared to

spending of \$42.16 per \$1,000 of personal income nationally. As with expenditures per pupil, Rhode Island ranks third highest in the New England region when expenditures are measured on a per \$1,000 of personal income basis (behind Vermont and Maine).

In both FY 1997 and FY 2007, Rhode Island's education spending per \$1,000 of personal income was higher than the national average (by 12.9 percent and 17.6 percent, respectively). Similarly, in both years Massachusetts and New Hampshire's education expenditures per \$1,000 of personal income was lower than the national

Table 22
Current Education Expenditures per \$1,000 of Personal Income

| | FY 1997 | | | FY 2007 | | | Change 1997-2007 | |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|----------|------------------|-------------|
| | Amount | % of US | Rank | Amount | % of US | Rank | Amount | Percent |
| U.S. Average* | \$40.31 | - | - | \$42.16 | - | - | \$1.85 | 4.6% |
| Connecticut | \$40.58 | 100.7% | 30 | \$42.18 | 100.0% | 27 | \$1.60 | 3.9% |
| Maine | 50.48 | 125.2% | 6 | 51.82 | 122.9% | 5 | 1.34 | 2.7% |
| Massachusetts | 37.12 | 92.1% | 39 | 40.53 | 96.1% | 32 | 3.40 | 9.2% |
| New Hampshire | 37.08 | 92.0% | 40 | 41.97 | 99.5% | 28 | 4.89 | 13.2% |
| Rhode Island | 45.52 | 112.9% | 11 | 49.57 | 117.6% | 9 | 4.04 | 8.9% |
| Vermont | 53.70 | 133.2% | 3 | 57.74 | 136.9% | 2 | 4.04 | 7.5% |

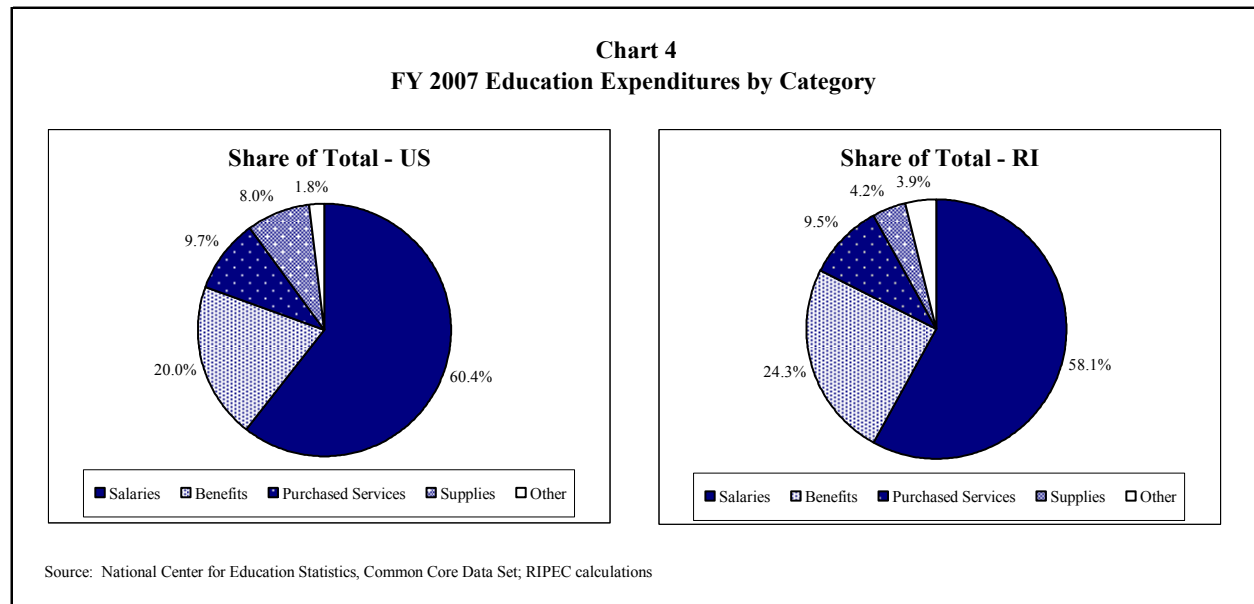
* Includes Washington D.C.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Set; Bureau of Economic Analysis; RIPEC calculations

average. At the same time, however, these two states experienced the fastest rate of growth in New England over the ten years covered in this analysis. During this time period, Rhode Island's education spending per \$1,000 of personal income grew \$4.04, twice the national average of \$1.85.

Expenditures by Category

The NCES organizes education expenditures into six major categories: salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies, tuition and other. Because tuition and other are relatively small categories they are presented together in the following analysis and labeled "other".



As Chart 4 shows, salaries represent the largest component of education expenditures both in Rhode Island and nationally, followed by benefits. Together, these two categories of spending accounted for 82.5 percent of all FY 2007 education spending in Rhode Island (80.4 percent, nationally). Benefits constituted a larger portion of elementary and secondary education budgets in Rhode Island than in the nation as a whole – 24.3 percent in the Ocean State compared to 20.0 percent nationally – while the State dedicated slightly less resources to salaries than the national average (58.1 percent compared to 60.4 percent). Comparatively, a smaller portion of education spending in the Ocean State goes to supplies than the national average, although spending on purchased services was approximately the same.

Table 23
Education Expenditure Category Share of Total
FY 1997 and FY 2007

| | US | | RI | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1997 | 2007 | 1997 | 2007 |
| Salaries | 64.8% | 60.4% | 63.3% | 58.1% |
| Benefits | 17.4% | 20.0% | 19.4% | 24.3% |
| Purchased Services | 8.5% | 9.7% | 11.3% | 9.5% |
| Supplies | 7.5% | 8.0% | 3.5% | 4.2% |
| Other | 1.7% | 1.8% | 2.5% | 3.9% |

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Data Set; RIPEC calculations

Between FY 1997 and FY 2007, salaries have decreased and benefits have increased relative to their share of total education spending both in Rhode Island and nationally. In FY 1997, education benefit expenditures accounted for 19.4 percent of education spending in the Ocean State, compared to 24.3 percent in FY 2007. Similarly, benefits were 17.4 percent of all education expenditures nationally in FY 1997 and 20.0 percent of the total in FY 2007. Conversely, salaries accounted for 63.3 percent of Rhode Island’s education spending in FY 1997, which decreased to 58.1 percent of all State education spending in FY 2007 while salaries nationally

decreased from 64.8 percent of all education spending to 60.4 percent of the total.

Given the labor-intensive aspects of education, personnel expenditures (salaries and benefits) constitute the largest portion of education budgets and the majority of this spending is for instructional staff (teachers and instructional aides). In FY 2007, instruction-related personnel expenditures accounted for 66.6 percent of all personnel expenditures in Rhode Island and 68.1 percent of all personnel spending nationally. Table 24 shows instructional staff salaries and benefits as measured on a per pupil basis for fiscal years 1997 and 2007. In both years, Rhode Island’s per pupil personnel-related spending for instructional staff was approximately 40 percent higher than the national average. On an absolute basis, all New England states saw a larger increase in instruction-related personnel spending compared to the national average, however, on a percentage basis, Rhode Island saw a slightly lower rate of growth than did the rest of the country (57.3 percent compared to 58.7 percent nationally).

Table 24
Instructional Salaries and Benefits per Pupil

| | FY 1997 | | | FY 2007 | | | Change 1997-2007 | |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|--------------|---------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| | Amount | % of US | Rank | Amount | % of US | Rank | Amount | Percent |
| U.S. Average* | \$3,347 | - | - | \$5,312 | - | - | \$1,965 | 58.7% |
| Connecticut | \$4,926 | 147.2% | 3 | \$7,588 | 142.8% | 3 | \$2,661 | 54.0% |
| Maine | 3,811 | 113.8% | 12 | 6,634 | 124.9% | 8 | 2,823 | 74.1% |
| Massachusetts | 4,167 | 124.5% | 6 | 7,581 | 142.7% | 4 | 3,414 | 81.9% |
| New Hampshire | 3,230 | 96.5% | 22 | 6,155 | 115.9% | 12 | 2,925 | 90.5% |
| Rhode Island | 4,699 | 140.4% | 4 | 7,393 | 139.2% | 5 | 2,695 | 57.3% |
| Vermont | 3,878 | 115.9% | 10 | 7,306 | 137.5% | 6 | 3,428 | 88.4% |

*US average includes District of Columbia
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Data Set; RIPEC calculations

Rhode Island Expenditures

This section of the report examines statewide expenditures and compares expenditures by district. The State's 36 districts are grouped into the following categories: urban core, urban ring, suburban, and emerging suburban. Expenditure data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, State Budget Office and the House Fiscal Staff, unless otherwise noted.

Statewide Trends

Prior to FY 1999, making accurate comparisons across Rhode Island's 36 school districts was complicated by the lack of uniform and comparable data as the districts relied on individual systems of accounting. In FY 1999, RIDE converted schools and districts to a uniform financial reporting system, In\$ite, which replaced "Form 31" as the primary reporting instrument. The Department is currently in the process of refining the implementation of the Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) which will help provide additional transparency, accountability and uniformity in financial reporting. Both In\$ite and the UCOA represent progress with regard to financial reporting; however, caution should be exercised when comparing data derived from "Form 31" (pre-1998) and subsequent years.

The expenditures discussed in the following pages include the State's contribution for teacher retirement, but exclude the State's construction aid program, charter schools and State-run schools (Davies, RI School for the Deaf and the Met School). Because FY 2008 is the most recent year for which complete expenditure data is available, RIPEC has forecast expenditures through FY 2015 based on a five-year rolling average for education expenditures. These expenditure estimates do not include the increase in expenditures in FY 2009 – FY 2011 that will result from the increased Title I and IDEA Part B funding through ARRA.

Table 25 also outlines actual and projected state aid (excluding aid to State-operated schools, direct charter school aid and school construction aid). Actual state aid is current through FY 2010 Enacted and is projected through FY 2015 using two models. The first model uses State Budget Office projections for increases in education aid. The second model assumes level funding for all state education aid except for the State's contribution for teacher retirement, which was forecast using State Budget Office projections. All estimates are based on the FY 2011 Proposed Budget. While a forecast is a useful benchmark to assess various policy options, data should be interpreted with caution, and inherent risks must be considered, such as the economic outlook or policy decisions such as a funding formula, which will have an impact on actual expenditures.

Projected Education Expenditures and State Share

Between FY 1995 and FY 2008 (the most recent year for which actual expenditure data is available), total education expenditures increased 106.7 percent from \$1,034.4 million to \$2,138.1 million. On a per pupil basis, expenditures grew from \$7,056 in FY 1995 to \$14,781 in FY 2008, an increase of 109.5 percent. If expenditures are adjusted to 2010 dollars, total expenditures increased 61.5 percent, or \$831.9 million over the thirteen-year time period, while per pupil spending increased by \$5,875 per pupil (63.7 percent).

Education expenditures are projected to increase to \$2,621.6 million by FY 2015, an increase of 153.4 percent over FY 1995 expenditures and an increase of 22.6 percent over FY 2008 expenditures. On a per pupil basis, FY 2015 expenditures are projected to increase to \$20,408, 189.2 percent greater than FY 1995 spending and 38.1 percent more than FY 2008 expenditures. Total and per pupil expenditures increased at approximately the same rate between FY 1995 and FY 2008, growing by average annual rates of 5.7 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively. However, spending per pupil is projected to outpace total spending through FY 2015. Total expenditures are projected to increase by an average annual rate of 3.0 percent, compared to a 4.7 percent average annual rate of growth in per pupil spending. This is due to the fact that, although student enrollments increased between FY 1995 and FY 2003, they were lower in FY 2008 than in FY 1995, and are projected to continue to decline through the remainder of the forecast period.

Table 25
State Share of Public Education Expenditures
FY 1995 - FY 2015 (Projected; \$ millions)

| Fiscal Year* | Total Spending (\$ million) | Percent Change Prev. Year | Exp. Per Pupil | Percent Change Prev. Year | Model 1*** | | | Model 2**** | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | | State Aid | Budget Office Est. (FY 2011) | State Share | State Aid** | % Change | State Share |
| 1995 | \$1,034.4 | 6.1% | \$7,056 | 4.9% | \$416.1 | 13.6% | 40.2% | \$416.1 | 13.6% | 40.2% |
| 1996 | 1,077.2 | 4.1% | 7,230 | 2.5% | 434.3 | 4.4% | 40.3% | 434.3 | 4.4% | 40.3% |
| 1997 | 1,128.8 | 4.8% | 7,498 | 3.7% | 446.3 | 2.8% | 39.5% | 446.3 | 2.8% | 39.5% |
| 1998 | 1,192.6 | 5.6% | 7,827 | 4.4% | 473.6 | 6.1% | 39.7% | 473.6 | 6.1% | 39.7% |
| 1999 | 1,297.1 | 8.8% | 8,439 | 7.8% | 510.4 | 7.8% | 39.3% | 510.4 | 7.8% | 39.3% |
| 2000 | 1,411.6 | 8.8% | 9,086 | 7.7% | 556.0 | 8.9% | 39.4% | 556.0 | 8.9% | 39.4% |
| 2001 | 1,509.3 | 6.9% | 9,658 | 6.3% | 602.3 | 8.3% | 39.9% | 602.3 | 8.3% | 39.9% |
| 2002 | 1,587.8 | 5.2% | 10,138 | 5.0% | 634.0 | 5.3% | 39.9% | 634.0 | 5.3% | 39.9% |
| 2003 | 1,697.5 | 6.9% | 10,799 | 6.5% | 661.8 | 4.4% | 39.0% | 661.8 | 4.4% | 39.0% |
| 2004 | 1,807.1 | 6.5% | 11,510 | 6.6% | 686.5 | 3.7% | 38.0% | 686.5 | 3.7% | 38.0% |
| 2005 | 1,876.6 | 3.8% | 12,218 | 6.1% | 697.8 | 1.6% | 37.2% | 697.8 | 1.6% | 37.2% |
| 2006 | 1,958.4 | 4.4% | 13,046 | 6.8% | 721.3 | 3.4% | 36.8% | 721.3 | 3.4% | 36.8% |
| 2007 | 2,087.0 | 6.6% | 14,114 | 8.2% | 763.3 | 5.8% | 36.6% | 763.3 | 5.8% | 36.6% |
| 2008 | 2,138.1 | 2.4% | 14,781 | 4.7% | 776.8 | 1.8% | 36.3% | 776.8 | 1.8% | 36.3% |
| 2009 | 2,200.6 | 2.9% | 15,514 | 5.0% | 732.6 | -5.7% | 33.3% | 732.6 | -5.7% | 33.3% |
| 2010E | 2,275.8 | 3.4% | 16,435 | 5.9% | 746.7 | 1.9% | 32.8% | 746.7 | 1.9% | 32.8% |
| 2011 | 2,351.3 | 3.3% | 17,340 | 5.5% | 781.2 | 4.6% | 33.2% | 735.8 | -1.5% | 31.3% |
| 2012 | 2,414.6 | 2.7% | 18,133 | 4.6% | 826.8 | 5.8% | 34.2% | 761.0 | 3.4% | 31.5% |
| 2013 | 2,484.3 | 2.9% | 18,954 | 4.5% | 844.7 | 2.2% | 34.0% | 770.9 | 1.3% | 31.0% |
| 2014 | 2,553.9 | 2.8% | 19,724 | 4.1% | 864.0 | 2.3% | 33.8% | 783.5 | 1.6% | 30.7% |
| 2015 | 2,621.6 | 2.6% | 20,408 | 3.5% | 883.3 | 2.2% | 33.7% | 797.5 | 1.8% | 30.4% |

* Starting in FY 1999, expenditures are based on InSite from the RI Dept. of Education; projections are based on a 5-year average rate of growth.
 ** State aid includes all aid to schools (distributed and non-distributed) except school construction aid and aid to state-operated and charter schools.
 *** Model 1 uses State Budget Office projections for increases in state education aid. Assumes the same teacher retirement increases as in Model 2
 **** Model 2 assumes level funding of all aid exclusive of retirement aid which is the 40% State share of teacher retirement costs. The remaining 60% of teacher retirement is supported by local government
 Sources: R.I. Department of Education, House Fiscal Staff budget documents, State Budget Office documents, and RIPEC calculations.

State aid – including all distributed and non-distributed education aid excluding charters (direct and indirect), school construction aid, and aid to State-run schools – increased from \$416.1 million in FY 1995 to \$746.7 million in the FY 2010 Enacted Budget, or by approximately 80 percent. However, as a share of total education spending, state aid has declined from a 40.2 percent share in FY 1995 to an estimated 32.8 percent share in FY 2010.

If state education aid were to grow at the rate projected by the Budget Office in the FY 2011 Proposed Budget, total state aid including retirement would increase to \$883.3 million (33.7 percent of total education spending) in FY 2015. If aid (excluding retirement) remained at FY 2010 Enacted levels and retirement were to increase by FY 2010 budget estimates, total state education aid would be \$797.5 million, or 30.4 percent of total education spending. It should be noted that the above figures include ARRA funds that supplanted general revenues of \$33.2 million in FY 2009 and \$36.1 million in FY 2010 (Enacted). If these funds were excluded, the State's share would have been 31.8 percent in FY 2009 and 31.2 percent in FY 2010.

FY 2010S and FY 2011 Changes to State Aid

Due to the budget shortfalls facing the State, the FY 2010 Supplemental Budget and the FY 2011 Budget (as proposed by the Governor) include cuts to state aid to education. Some of the cuts are offset with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA); however, total education aid is lower in both budgets when compared to the FY 2010 Enacted Budget. The following discussion and table include the Met School.

In the FY 2011 budget as proposed, education aid is again reduced by an across-the-board cut of \$25.2 million (3.8 percent) when compared to the FY 2010 Enacted Budget, as well as by the estimated local savings resulting from the proposed pension reform (\$19.1 million). General revenues increase slightly when compared to the FY 2010 Enacted budget, reflecting, in part, the forward-shift of the stabilization funds to FY 2010. Final total FY 2011 aid of \$632.6 million is \$44.0 million less than FY 2010 Enacted totals and \$6.5 million less than the FY 2010S total. General revenues for education aid in FY 2011 of \$607.8 million are \$34.0 million less than FY 2010 Enacted and \$8.1 million more than the FY 2010S Budget as proposed.

Expenditures by Category

In addition to forecasting total expenditures and State share through FY 2015, detailed expenditures have been forecast for FY 2010. As shown on Table 27, between FY 2000 and FY 2010, total education expenditures are projected to increase \$864.2 million to \$2,275.8 million, an increase 61.2 percent. General education expenditures (including spending on general instruction, instruction and administrative support, facilities management, transportation, and non-instructional services), are expected to increase 52.7 percent, from \$1,025.2 million in FY 2000 to \$1,565.2 million in FY 2010. These expenditures are projected to account for 62.5 percent of the total growth over the past decade.

| | FY 2011P |
|---|------------------|
| Enacted FY 10 Distributed Aid | \$ 641.8 |
| Enacted FY 2010 Stabilization Funds | 34.7 |
| <i>All Funds FY 2010 Enacted Aid</i> | <i>\$ 676.5</i> |
| Across the Board Reduction | \$ (25.2) |
| Pension Reform Adjustment | (19.1) |
| Group Home Adjustment | (0.6) |
| Met School Increase | 0.4 |
| <i>Changes to Aid Subtotal</i> | <i>\$ (44.5)</i> |
| General Revenues to Stabilization Funds | \$ - |
| Federal Stabilization Funds | (10.0) |
| Stabilization Fund Backfill with General Revenues | 10.5 |
| <i>ARRA Shifts Subtotal</i> | <i>\$ 0.6</i> |
| Total Aid | \$ 632.6 |
| General Revenues | \$ 607.8 |

NOTE: Figures include aid to the Met School
SOURCE: State Budget Documents; RIPEC calculations

Special education expenditures are estimated to have increased by almost 90 percent over the past decade, from \$266.3 million in FY 2000 to \$505.7 million in FY 2010. This translates into an average annual rate of 7.4 percent. During this time, special education expenditures

Table 27
2000 - 2010 Rhode Island Education Expenditures (\$ millions)

| Function | 2000 | | 2010* | | Change 2000-2010 | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Amount | % of Total | Amount | % of Total | Amount | Percent |
| General Education | \$1,025.2 | 72.6% | \$1,565.2 | 71.1% | \$540.0 | 52.7% |
| Special Education | 266.3 | 18.9% | 505.7 | 23.0% | 239.3 | 89.9% |
| English Language Learners | 30.8 | 2.2% | 33.1 | 1.5% | 2.2 | 7.2% |
| All Other Expenditures** | 89.3 | 6.3% | 171.9 | 7.8% | 82.6 | 92.6% |
| Total*** | \$1,411.6 | 100.0% | \$2,275.8 | 103.4% | \$864.2 | 61.2% |

*Estimated expenditures, based on 5-year rolling average rate of growth.
 ** Includes teacher retirement
 *** Excludes State-run and charter schools
 Source: R.I. Dept. of Education, and RIPEC calculations.

increased from an 18.9 percent share of total education spending to a 23.0 percent share.

Spending on programs for ELL students increased by a projected \$2.2 million (7.2 percent) over the past decade. This increase accounted for an estimated 0.3 percent of the total increase in expenditures. Although ELL-related expenditures increased from \$30.8 million to \$33.1 million, ELL programs are estimated to account for a smaller share of total spending in FY 2010 than in FY 2000 (1.5 percent v. 2.2 percent, respectively).

All other expenditures, including spending on teacher retirement, almost doubled over the past decade, growing from \$89.3 million (6.3 percent of total spending) in FY 2000 to a projected \$171.9 million (7.8 percent of total education expenditures) in FY 2010. Although this category accounts for just 9.6 percent of total growth over the decade, it increased faster than any other category of spending, growing at an average annual rate of 7.6 percent.

On a per pupil basis, total education spending increased 70.7 percent, from \$9,086 in FY 2000 to an estimated \$15,514 per pupil in FY 2010. This translates into an average annual rate of growth of 6.9 percent. General education expenditures increased from \$6,599 per pupil in FY 2000 to an estimated \$10,781 per pupil, an increase of 63.4 percent (average annual rate of 6.3 percent).

Table 28
Rhode Island Education Expenditures Per Pupil

| Function | 2000 | 2010* | Change 2000-2010 | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Amount | Amount | Amount | Percent |
| General Education | \$6,599 | \$10,781 | \$4,182 | 63.4% |
| Special Education | 8,674 | 19,023 | 10,349 | 119.3% |
| English Language Learners | 3,024 | 4,971 | 1,947 | 64.4% |
| Total** | \$9,086 | \$15,514 | \$6,428 | 70.7% |

*Estimated expenditures, based on 5-year rolling average rate of growth.
 ** Total includes teacher retirement.
 Source: R.I. Dept. of Education and RIPEC calculations.

During this time period, total enrollment declined from 155,351 students to 140,960 students, or by 9.3 percent.

Per pupil spending on special education services are estimated to more than double over the decade, growing from \$8,674 per pupil in FY 2000 to an estimated \$19,023 in FY 2010 (119.3 percent). During the same time period, special education

enrollments have declined 16.6 percent, from 30,704 students in FY 2000 to 25,613 students in FY 2010. Similarly, while total ELL expenditures are projected to increase by just 7.2 percent, per pupil spending on ELL-related programs is estimated to increase by 66.6 percent, from \$3,024 per pupil in FY 2000 to a projected \$5,038 per pupil in FY 2010. The difference is driven by the fact that ELL enrollments have declined by 35.2 percent over the decade, from 10,196 students in FY 2000 to 6,607 students in FY 2010.

District Expenditures

The following discussion of expenditures by school district is based on InSite data and does not include the State's contribution to the teacher retirement fund, as did the statewide discussion above (district contributions, however, are included). In addition, RIPEC did not estimate expenditures by district for FY 2009 or 2010; the following discussion highlights expenditures through FY 2008, the most recent, complete data available to date.

District Trends

Between FY 2003 and FY 2008, statewide education expenditures (excluding the State contribution to teacher retirement) increased from \$1,659.5 million to \$2,057.9 million (24.0 percent). Over the five year period, education expenditures increased the most in the State's suburban districts, growing by \$121.5 million (28.6 percent). This increase accounted for 30.5 percent of the total increase in education spending between FY 2003 and FY 2008. The State's emerging suburban districts experienced the smallest growth in expenditures (\$76.3 million, or 19.2 percent of the total increase); however, total FY 2008 education expenditures in these districts were 27.0 percent higher than FY 2003 spending.

Of the \$398.4 million net increase in spending, urban core districts accounted for \$95.9 million, or 24.1 percent. Over the five years, total urban core spending increased by 17.1 percent, the smallest percentage increase and second smallest absolute increase across the district groupings. Total spending in the urban ring districts increased by \$104.7 million, or by 26.7 percent, accounting for 26.3 percent of the total increase in expenditures over the five years.

Statewide, general education expenditures increased from \$1,206.3 million in FY 2003 to \$1,473.6 million in FY 2008, an increase of \$267.4 million or 22.2 percent. However, expenditures in this category vary among the community types as shown in Chart 5. On average, emerging and suburban communities spent the most on general education as a percentage of their total education expenditures in FY 2008 (77.1 and 75.5 percent, compared to the urban core and urban ring districts where general education spending accounted for 66.3 percent and 70.4 percent of total FY 2008 spending, respectively). Between FY 2003 and FY 2008, spending on general education increased by 15.4 percent in the urban core districts, compared to an increase of 22.8 percent in the urban ring, 26.2 percent in the suburban districts, and 26.9 percent in the emerging suburban districts.

In all classifications, special education spending has increased as a share of total expenditures; FY 2008 special education expenditures accounted for a low of 20.2 percent in the emerging suburban districts to a high of 24.7 percent of total spending in the State's urban ring districts. Between FY 2003 and FY 2008, spending on special education increased, on average, 29.4 percent. Special education spending in the urban ring and suburban districts increased almost

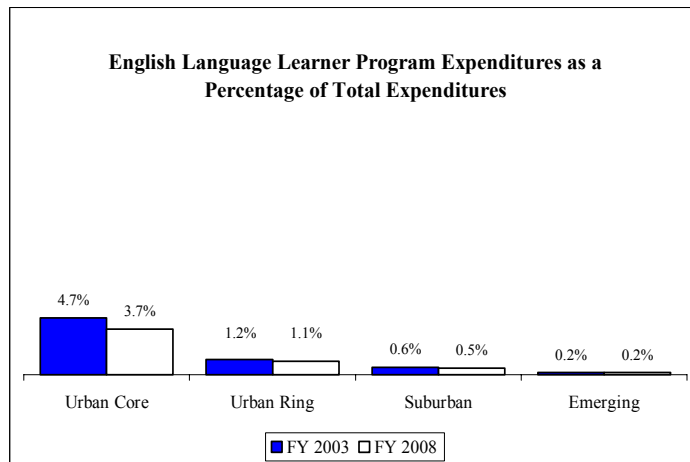
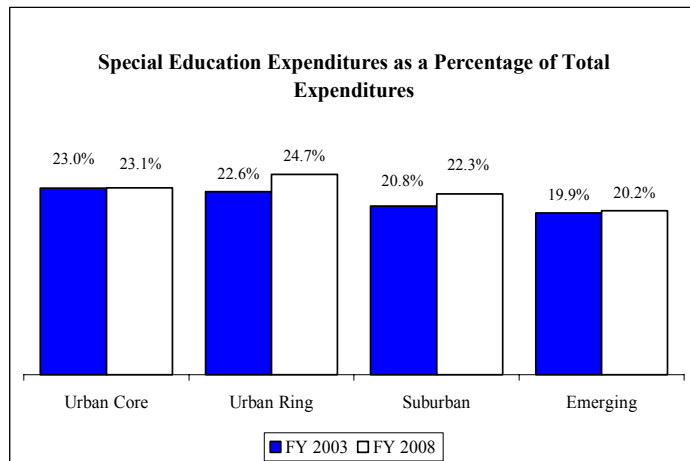
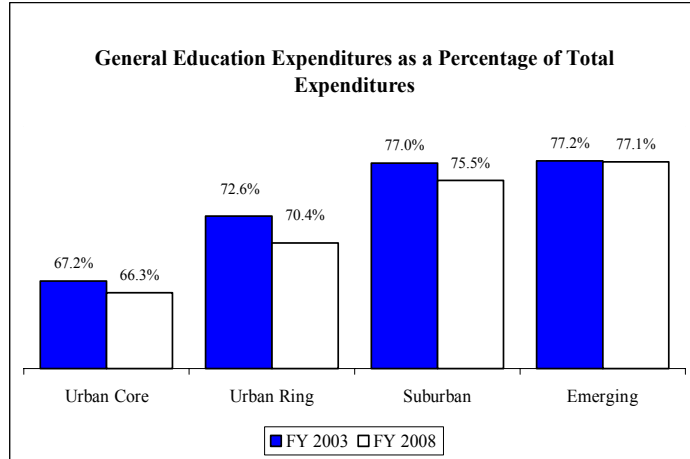
twice as fast as special education spending in the urban core districts (38.8 percent and 37.8 percent v. 17.4 percent, respectively). The emerging suburban districts saw special education expenditures increase by 28.6 percent over the five years.

Spending on ELL programs declined as a share of total expenditures across all four district classifications. Outside of the urban districts, ELL programs accounted for less than 0.5 percent of total spending in FY 2008. In the urban ring, ELL expenditures represented 1.1 percent of total spending, while ELL spending accounted for 3.7 percent of total urban core expenditures. Spending on ELL programs has increased in the urban ring, suburban and emerging suburban districts by a total of \$1.2 million; however, expenditures on these programs declined by \$1.5 million in the urban core districts. As a result, total statewide spending on ELL declined by \$0.3 million (1.0 percent) over the five years.

Per Pupil Education Expenditures

Table 29 outlines selected expenditures per pupil for FY 2003 and FY 2008, using data that districts have reported to RIDE. Given significant differences in student enrollment and student need, it is important to analyze per pupil expenditures. Per pupil expenditures allow for a common basis for comparison across districts. Looking at spending by program provides a picture of how resources are allocated within a district.

Chart 5
General Education, Special Education and English Language Learner Expenditures as a Share of Total Spending
FY 2003 and FY 2008



SOURCE: RI Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

Table 29
Selected Expenditures by Program per Pupil
FY 2003 - FY 2008

| | Total Expenditures | | | | General Education | | | | English Language Learners | | | | Special Education | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | 2002-03 Amount | 2007-08 Amount | Change Amount | Change Percent | 2002-03 Amount | 2007-08 Amount | Change Amount | Change Percent | 2002-03 Amount | 2007-08 Amount | Change Amount | Change Percent | 2002-03 Amount | 2007-08 Amount | Change Amount | Change Percent |
| <i>Urban Core</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Falls | \$11,863 | \$15,710 | \$3,847 | 32.4% | \$6,409 | \$9,193 | \$2,784 | 43.4% | \$4,501 | \$4,910 | \$408 | 9.1% | \$13,745 | \$17,937 | \$4,192 | 30.5% |
| Newport | 13,375 | 18,450 | 5,075 | 37.9% | 9,395 | 12,645 | 3,249 | 34.6% | 1,946 | 4,785 | 2,839 | 145.9% | 10,260 | 15,474 | 5,213 | 50.8% |
| Pawtucket | 9,759 | 12,822 | 3,063 | 31.4% | 6,166 | 8,136 | 1,970 | 31.9% | 4,347 | 6,031 | 1,684 | 38.7% | 12,203 | 14,490 | 2,287 | 18.7% |
| Providence | 11,220 | 15,258 | 4,038 | 36.0% | 7,799 | 10,442 | 2,643 | 33.9% | 2,907 | 4,297 | 1,390 | 47.8% | 12,607 | 16,845 | 4,238 | 33.6% |
| Woonsocket | 10,746 | 12,267 | 1,522 | 14.2% | 7,418 | 7,426 | 9 | 0.1% | 2,699 | 1,331 | (1,367) | -50.7% | 9,859 | 12,894 | 3,035 | 30.8% |
| Subtotal | \$11,045 | \$14,560 | \$3,515 | 31.8% | \$7,425 | \$9,590 | \$2,165 | 29.2% | \$3,303 | \$4,504 | \$1,201 | 36.4% | \$12,037 | \$15,788 | \$3,751 | 31.2% |
| <i>Urban Ring</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cranston | \$9,244 | \$13,119 | \$3,875 | 41.9% | \$6,691 | \$9,070 | \$2,379 | 35.6% | \$3,796 | \$5,781 | \$1,985 | 52.3% | \$9,621 | \$16,805 | \$7,184 | 74.7% |
| East Providence | 10,150 | 14,181 | 4,031 | 39.7% | 7,287 | 9,060 | 1,773 | 24.3% | 5,313 | 3,704 | (1,609) | -30.3% | 10,672 | 16,416 | 5,744 | 53.8% |
| North Providence | 10,758 | 14,055 | 3,298 | 30.7% | 7,632 | 10,402 | 2,770 | 36.3% | 5,730 | 9,558 | 3,829 | 66.8% | 14,357 | 18,473 | 4,116 | 28.7% |
| Warwick | 11,549 | 15,258 | 3,709 | 32.1% | 8,550 | 11,192 | 2,642 | 30.9% | 5,222 | 6,633 | 1,411 | 27.0% | 11,998 | 18,333 | 6,334 | 52.8% |
| West Warwick | 11,399 | 15,149 | 3,750 | 32.9% | 8,123 | 10,555 | 2,432 | 29.9% | 7,596 | 7,654 | 58 | 0.8% | 11,551 | 15,946 | 4,395 | 38.1% |
| Subtotal | \$10,522 | \$14,285 | \$3,763 | 35.8% | \$7,641 | \$10,032 | \$2,391 | 31.3% | \$4,879 | \$5,716 | \$837 | 17.2% | \$11,239 | \$17,219 | \$5,980 | 53.2% |
| <i>Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington | \$9,458 | \$11,721 | \$2,263 | 23.9% | \$7,377 | \$8,957 | \$1,580 | 21.4% | \$2,753 | \$3,784 | \$1,031 | 37.5% | \$11,440 | \$15,545 | \$4,105 | 35.9% |
| Bristol-Warren | 12,266 | 19,391 | 7,125 | 58.1% | 9,596 | 15,748 | 6,152 | 64.1% | 4,085 | 4,524 | 438 | 10.7% | 9,827 | 20,713 | 10,886 | 110.8% |
| Cumberland | 7,922 | 10,540 | 2,618 | 33.1% | 5,754 | 8,007 | 2,254 | 39.2% | 4,820 | 7,041 | 2,221 | 46.1% | 8,809 | 13,220 | 4,411 | 50.1% |
| East Greenwich | 10,458 | 13,214 | 2,756 | 26.4% | 8,017 | 10,186 | 2,169 | 27.1% | 2,318 | 2,039 | (278) | -12.0% | 13,388 | 18,538 | 5,149 | 38.5% |
| Jamestown | 15,434 | 22,901 | 7,468 | 48.4% | 11,934 | 16,686 | 4,752 | 39.8% | 2,917 | 17,950 | 15,032 | 515.3% | 13,786 | 19,576 | 5,790 | 42.0% |
| Johnston | 11,691 | 15,690 | 3,999 | 34.2% | 8,263 | 10,236 | 1,973 | 23.9% | 7,782 | 6,136 | (1,645) | -21.1% | 11,919 | 17,910 | 5,991 | 50.3% |
| Lincoln | 9,310 | 14,331 | 5,021 | 53.9% | 7,020 | 10,520 | 3,500 | 49.9% | 4,116 | 9,258 | 5,142 | 124.9% | 10,661 | 19,457 | 8,796 | 82.5% |
| Middletown | 10,879 | 15,102 | 4,223 | 38.8% | 8,832 | 11,420 | 2,588 | 29.3% | 2,428 | 1,726 | (702) | -28.9% | 9,043 | 15,355 | 6,311 | 69.8% |
| Narragansett | 13,875 | 18,742 | 4,867 | 35.1% | 10,776 | 14,805 | 4,030 | 37.4% | 5,936 | 6,915 | 980 | 16.5% | 12,855 | 19,731 | 6,876 | 53.5% |
| North Kingstown | 10,438 | 13,202 | 2,764 | 26.5% | 8,473 | 9,847 | 1,375 | 16.2% | 5,743 | 9,097 | 3,354 | 58.4% | 11,026 | 17,222 | 6,196 | 56.2% |
| Portsmouth | 9,429 | 11,955 | 2,526 | 26.8% | 7,627 | 8,946 | 1,318 | 17.3% | - | - | - | - | 9,169 | 14,528 | 5,359 | 58.5% |
| Smithfield | 9,251 | 12,421 | 3,170 | 34.3% | 7,343 | 9,645 | 2,302 | 31.4% | - | 3,002 | 3,002 | - | 10,356 | 21,304 | 10,949 | 105.7% |
| Westerly | 10,755 | 15,965 | 5,210 | 48.4% | 7,989 | 11,681 | 3,692 | 46.2% | 4,533 | 7,400 | 2,867 | 63.3% | 11,940 | 20,206 | 8,266 | 69.2% |
| Subtotal | \$10,329 | \$14,122 | \$3,793 | 36.7% | \$7,953 | \$10,635 | \$2,681 | 33.7% | \$4,392 | \$5,610 | \$1,218 | 27.7% | \$10,705 | \$17,331 | \$6,626 | 61.9% |
| <i>Emerging Suburban</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burrillville | \$9,376 | \$11,808 | \$2,432 | 25.9% | \$7,348 | \$9,100 | \$1,752 | 23.8% | \$4,725 | \$3,476 | (\$1,249) | -26.4% | \$9,706 | \$11,398 | \$1,692 | 17.4% |
| Chariho | 11,032 | 14,656 | 3,623 | 32.8% | 8,059 | 11,044 | 2,985 | 37.0% | 5,520 | 6,734 | 1,215 | 22.0% | 12,649 | 21,057 | 8,408 | 66.5% |
| Coventry | 9,417 | 12,440 | 3,023 | 32.1% | 7,186 | 9,454 | 2,268 | 31.6% | 8,556 | 19,309 | 10,753 | 125.7% | 9,310 | 13,809 | 4,498 | 48.3% |
| Exeter-West Greenwich | 10,918 | 16,030 | 5,112 | 46.8% | 8,578 | 12,769 | 4,191 | 48.9% | 9,476 | 3,680 | (5,796) | -61.2% | 11,256 | 17,892 | 6,636 | 59.0% |
| Foster | 9,907 | 16,969 | 7,062 | 71.3% | 8,013 | 13,473 | 5,460 | 68.1% | - | - | - | - | 13,867 | 19,097 | 5,230 | 37.7% |
| Foster-Glocester | 9,086 | 12,337 | 3,251 | 35.8% | 7,781 | 10,585 | 2,804 | 36.0% | - | - | - | - | 7,797 | 14,572 | 6,775 | 86.9% |
| Glocester | 10,593 | 15,208 | 4,615 | 43.6% | 8,211 | 12,824 | 4,613 | 56.2% | - | - | - | - | 12,159 | 19,957 | 7,798 | 64.1% |
| Little Compton | 13,528 | 19,060 | 5,532 | 40.9% | 11,795 | 15,853 | 4,058 | 34.4% | - | - | - | - | 6,902 | 12,881 | 5,978 | 86.6% |
| New Shoreham | 21,171 | 28,891 | 7,721 | 36.5% | 17,051 | 25,604 | 8,553 | 50.2% | 19,496 | 20,295 | 799 | 4.1% | 21,687 | 16,115 | (5,572) | -25.7% |
| North Smithfield | 8,971 | 11,454 | 2,483 | 27.7% | 6,919 | 8,720 | 1,801 | 26.0% | - | 3,349 | 3,349 | - | 10,792 | 14,922 | 4,130 | 38.3% |
| Scituate | 8,929 | 12,109 | 3,180 | 35.6% | 7,326 | 10,013 | 2,687 | 36.7% | - | - | - | - | 8,171 | 13,430 | 5,259 | 64.4% |
| South Kingstown | 10,868 | 16,236 | 5,368 | 49.4% | 7,906 | 11,662 | 3,755 | 47.5% | 5,220 | 8,211 | 2,990 | 57.3% | 13,328 | 20,283 | 6,954 | 52.2% |
| Tiverton | 9,336 | 12,848 | 3,512 | 37.6% | 7,589 | 9,529 | 1,940 | 25.6% | - | - | - | - | 7,493 | 14,768 | 7,275 | 97.1% |
| Subtotal | \$10,034 | \$13,725 | \$3,691 | 36.8% | \$7,742 | \$10,557 | \$2,814 | 36.3% | \$6,610 | \$8,055 | \$1,446 | 21.9% | \$10,529 | \$16,036 | \$5,506 | 52.3% |
| Total | \$10,553 | \$14,226 | \$3,673 | 34.8% | \$7,671 | \$10,150 | \$2,479 | 32.3% | \$3,559 | \$4,794 | \$1,235 | 34.7% | \$11,249 | \$16,572 | \$5,323 | 47.3% |

Enrollments are based on October 1 counts except for Special Education, which relies on December counts; October 1 enrollment counts accessed March 4, 2010
Source: RI Dept of Education and RIPEC calculations.

In FY 2008, Rhode Island schools spent \$14,226 per pupil on average, an increase of \$3,673, or 34.8 percent over FY 2003 expenditures. Spending per pupil of \$14,560 was the highest in the urban core districts in FY 2008, while expenditures in emerging suburban districts were the lowest at \$13,725 per pupil. Expenditures in suburban districts averaged \$14,122 per pupil and spending in the State's urban ring districts was \$14,285 per pupil.

Although the urban core districts have the highest total per pupil expenditures, on average the five districts have the lowest per pupil expenditures across the three program allocations. This indicates that a significant portion of their high levels of spending is driven by their student population which has a higher level of need in comparison to the other three designations. For

example, the urban core districts spend, on average, \$4,504 on ELL programs per ELL-enrolled student compared to \$5,716 per ELL student in the urban ring communities. However, students in ELL programs accounted for 12.0 percent of the total urban core population in FY 2008, but only 2.7 percent in the urban ring communities.

Average general education spending across the State increased from \$7,671 per pupil in FY 2003 to \$10,150 per pupil in FY 2008, an increase of 32.3 percent. Spending on general education in FY 2008 ranged from a high of \$16,686 in Jamestown (excluding New Shoreham) to a low of \$7,426 in Woonsocket. On average, the urban core communities spent the lowest amount of per pupil on general education (\$9,590 per pupil), while the suburban communities spent the most (\$10,635 per pupil).

Per pupil expenditures for English language learner programs increased from \$3,559 in FY 2003 to \$4,794 in FY 2008, a 34.7 percent increase. Expenditures in these programs were the highest, on average, in the State's emerging suburban communities, which spent \$8,055 per pupil in FY 2008. The urban communities spent the least on per pupil ELL programs in FY 2008, with expenditures of \$4,504 per pupil. At the same time, ELL-related spending has increased the fastest in the urban core districts, growing by 36.4 percent over the five-year time period.

Special education expenditures increased, on average, from \$11,249 per pupil in FY 2003 to \$16,572 per pupil in FY 2008, a 47.3 percent increase. While urban core districts had the highest per pupil special education expenditures in FY 2003, the State's suburban districts, on average, had the highest per pupil spending in FY 2008, with expenditures of \$17,331 per pupil. Spending in this category ranged from a high of \$21,304 in Smithfield to a low of \$11,398 in Burrillville.

Glossary

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – is an individual state's measure of progress toward the goal of 100 percent of students achieving to state academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math by 2014. It sets the minimum level of proficiency that the state, its school districts, and schools must achieve each year on annual tests and related academic indicators such as attendance and graduation rates.

Adult Educational Attainment (US Census) – the highest grade of school completed, or the highest degree received, presented as a percent of the population 25 years or older.

Current Expenditures (NCES) – includes expenditures for operating local public schools, excluding equipment, non-public school education, school construction, and interest on school debt. These expenditures include such items as salaries for school personnel, fixed charges, student transportation, school books and materials, and energy costs.

Emerging Suburban districts – a RIPEC-defined category which includes: Burrillville, Chariho, Coventry, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster, Foster-Glocester, Glocester, North Smithfield, Scituate, South Kingstown, and Tiverton.

Fall Enrollment – is the count of pupils registered in the fall of the school year.

Free and Reduced Lunch – a federally assisted program that provides reduced lunches to school children between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level, and free lunches to students at or below 130 percent of poverty. This measure is often used as a proxy for the number of students living in poverty.

Index Proficiency Score – used to determine if a school has met its **annual yearly progress** requirements under NCLB. The score is calculated by translating student scores on the **NECAP** examination into an index score which is aggregated to determine the school's score. As required by the provisions of NCLB, these scores must increase from the baseline in five intermediate steps until all students in all schools achieve 100 percent proficiency in 2014. Schools must meet these targets for the school as a whole, and within each disaggregated group.

Individual Education Plan – see **Special Education**.

English Language Learners – students served in appropriate programs of language assistance (e.g. English as a Second Language, high-intensity language assistance or bilingual education).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – often referred to as “The Nation’s Report Card”, the NAEP is the only national metric that allows cross-comparisons of student performance in various subject areas including math, reading, writing and science. NAEP assessments are administered uniformly across the country, using the same sets of testing materials. In addition, the exam remains essentially the same every testing period, allowing for longitudinal comparison of test results. Results are based on a representative sample of students at grades 4, 8 and 12 for the main assessments and are reported for groups of students (e.g., by grade) and for populations within those groups (e.g., by gender or race).

The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) – Rhode Island’s assessment tool, which was developed jointly with New Hampshire and Vermont to meet the standards of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – Federal legislation enacted in 2001 and signed into law January 2002. Provisions of the Act (for all States and schools that receive **Title 1** funds) include mandating student testing in grades 3-8 and at least once during high school, requiring that all teachers be “highly qualified”, and a requirement that all students, as well as student subgroups make **adequate yearly progress (AYP)**. In addition to meeting AYP targets at the school-wide level, specified subgroups of students, such as racial and ethnic minorities, are required to meet NCLB goals unless there are 30 or fewer students in the subgroup. Schools and districts that fail to meet AYP are subject to a range of sanctions that increase every year the school fails to make AYP and culminate in the possibility of a state takeover or reconstitution.

Per Pupil Expenditures – a measure of education expenditures calculated by dividing total expenditures by the number of enrolled students.

Poverty – the percent of families below the poverty line and at or below the poverty line (\$20,444 for a family of four with two children in 2006).

Revenue (NCES) – Monies for public school purposes derived from three sources: state, local and federal. All revenues include pass-through revenues (i.e., federal funds that pass through a state are still considered federal).

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) – a self-selected, standardized college admissions test administered by The College Board throughout the country, with results available at the state and district level. The exam is primarily taken by high school seniors but is open to all individuals. The SAT reasoning test consists of three sections: critical reading, mathematics and writing (which was added in 2005). Each section has a maximum scaled score of 800, such that perfect performance on the SAT with all three sections would equate to a score of 2,400.

Special Education – (also know as **Individual Education Plan**) the percent of students identified as having special needs or difficulties learning or functioning in a classroom.

Suburban districts – RIPEC defined to include Barrington, Bristol-Warren, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Johnston, Lincoln, Middletown, Narragansett, North Kingstown, Portsmouth, Smithfield, and Westerly.

Title 1 – formerly known as Chapter 1, this program is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and provides the foundation for Federal efforts to close the achievement gap between low-income and other students. Title 1 provides additional financial support to states and districts for support services targeted at children in poverty. Since 1994, Title 1 funds can be used for a wide range of activities, from instructional activities to professional development. Funds are allocated on a formula basis that takes into account the number of low-income children and the statewide average per pupil expenditure. After the passage of the **No Child Left Behind Act**, schools that receive Title 1 funding are required to meet accountability requirements for raising student performance.

Urban Core districts – a RIPEC category that encompasses the cities of Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Urban Ring districts – RIPEC-designated category that includes: Cranston, East Providence, North Providence, Warwick, and West Warwick.