

**RESULTS:  
Education in Rhode  
Island 2016**

April 2016



**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.

# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
I. Introduction	1
II. RIPEC Comments	2
III. Student Performance	6
IV. Student Demographics	20
V. School Revenues	27
VI. School Expenditures	34

## I. Introduction

A public education system is the bedrock of both a democratic society and a vibrant economy and, as such, is one of the essential functions of government. There are numerous benefits that accrue to society as a result of an educated population, including decreased government spending on crime, social welfare and public health, and increased tax revenues. Undoubtedly, education provides wide-ranging benefits; however, it also represents one of the most significant financial investments made by government. Therefore, the question of how to provide a quality educational system, something widely recognized as paramount to ensure economic development – at an affordable price to taxpayers – has grown increasingly important.

Rhode Island’s recent education reforms lay out an ambitious agenda that articulates the state’s long-term educational priorities, and the strategies for reaching those goals. Over the last decade, Rhode Island has implemented a number of far-reaching educational reforms, including a new accountability system, as well as the adoption of a state funding formula and Uniform Chart of Accounts. The Department of Education should be commended for taking steps to move the state’s educational system forward; however, there is still more work to be done to truly transform education in Rhode Island.

While education policy decisions are often subject to political ideology, the foundation for addressing these issues is accurate and complete data. The following RIPEC report – *Education Results, 2016* – provides a tool for policymakers and stakeholders to address the issue of education reform in the Ocean State. This report provides comprehensive data and a robust analysis of public school performance *vis-à-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 identify areas where increased attention may be warranted.

In addition to this Introduction, the report is divided into five sections:

- *RIPEC Comments* – provides RIPEC’s perspective on the state educational system;
- *Student Performance* – evaluates Rhode Island’s performance on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP);
- *Student Demographics* – provides an overview of state and student demographics including poverty, educational attainment, individual education plan, and limited English proficiency students;
- *School Revenues* – documents the source and amount of resources used to support education; and
- *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.

The report will also be available on RIPEC’s website at: [www.ripec.org](http://www.ripec.org)

## II. RIPEC Comments

As Rhode Island's economy continues to recover from the effects of the Great Recession, the importance of an effective, cost-efficient public education system cannot be understated. For the state to successfully transition into the modern, globalized economy, it will need to have a skilled, flexible and well-educated labor force. One of the most important factors that businesses consider when deciding where to locate, or expand, operations is access to a high-quality workforce. If Rhode Island is to prosper, its public schools must better prepare the next generation to enter the workforce, meet the needs of local employers and excel in their chosen careers.

Over the last several years, the General Assembly, in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), has enacted and implemented a reform agenda intended to improve the state's public school system. These reforms include the establishment of a state education funding formula, adoption of the Common Core State Standards and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) examinations and development of an educator evaluation system. Although these reforms represent important first steps towards improving Rhode Island's public schools, additional action must be taken if the state is to have a truly first-class public education system.

An examination of Rhode Island's performance over time on several standardized tests provides one method of measuring the state's progress in improving its public school system. This report examines the performance of Rhode Island's students on four standardized tests: the SAT, ACT, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the PARCC assessment. In addition to analyzing standardized test results, this report also explores Rhode Island's education revenue and expenditure trends over time, as well as in comparison to both the national average and the other New England states.

In recent years, Rhode Island public school students have performed close to the national average on several standardized tests, despite the fact that the state spends substantially more per pupil than do many other states. During Fiscal Year 2013 (the 2012-2013 school year), Rhode Island spent \$14,889 per pupil, a sum which was 38.3 percent greater than the national average of \$10,763 per pupil and the ninth-highest amount nationally. Despite this, Rhode Island students' performance on the NAEP was comparable to the national average in reading and mathematics. In 2015, 35.0 percent of Rhode Island 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored *at or above proficient* on the NAEP reading examination, compared to 33.0 percent nationally. Similarly, 32.0 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored *at or above proficient* on the NAEP mathematics examination, compared to the same percentage nationally.

In 2015, the PARCC assessments were administered to public school students in Rhode Island and ten other states (as well as the District of Columbia). Just 36.8 percent of Rhode Island students in grades 3 through 8 met expectations on the English language arts (ELA)/literacy portion of the exam, while 26.3 percent of students met expectations on the mathematics portion of the exam. By comparison, 59.9 percent of Massachusetts students in the same grades met expectations on the ELA/literacy portion of the exam and 51.5 percent of students met expectations on the mathematics portion of the exam. Students in Rhode Island performed most

similarly to those in Arkansas and Mississippi on the assessment, while being outperformed by students in Illinois, New Jersey and Ohio, among other states.

With respect to its neighboring states in New England, Rhode Island is an outlier in that it spends more per pupil than the national average, but performs similarly to the national averages on standardized tests. By way of comparison, Massachusetts also spends significantly more per pupil than the national average, but also outperforms the national averages on most standardized tests. During FY 2013, Massachusetts spent \$15,321 per pupil, an amount that was 42.3 percent greater than the national average and eighth-highest in the nation. However, Massachusetts 8<sup>th</sup> grade students also outperformed the national averages on both the NAEP reading and mathematics examinations by large margins. Table 1 displays per pupil education expenditures for each New England state, as well as each state’s performance on the SAT and NAEP 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and mathematics examinations.

State	<u>2012-2013 (FY 2013)</u>			<u>2015</u>				<u>2015</u>		<u>2015</u>	
	Per Pupil Expenditures*			SAT Mean Scores				NAEP - 8th Grade Reading		NAEP - 8th Grade Mathematics	
	Amount	% of US Average	Rank	Reading	Math	Writing	Total	Below Basic	At or Above Proficient	Below Basic	At or Above Proficient
U.S. Average**	\$10,763	-	-	489	498	475	1462	25%	33%	30%	32%
Connecticut	\$17,321	160.9%	5	494	495	494	1483	18%	43%	28%	36%
Maine	12,655	117.6%	14	463	466	445	1374	19%	36%	24%	35%
Massachusetts	15,321	142.3%	8	507	521	497	1525	17%	46%	19%	51%
New Hampshire	14,050	130.5%	11	515	520	500	1535	15%	45%	16%	46%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>14,889</b>	<b>138.3%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>1429</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Vermont	17,286	160.6%	6	521	520	505	1546	17%	44%	21%	42%

\*Public schools grades K-12; includes expenditures for instruction, support services and employee salaries and benefits; ranks include D.C.  
 \*\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia  
 Note: SAT and NAEP results are for public school students only.  
 Source: National Center for Education Statistics; The College Board; U.S. Census Bureau

As the data in Table 1 indicate, all six New England states spent more per pupil than the national average during FY 2013. Rhode Island’s per pupil expenditures during that fiscal year were greater than those of Maine and New Hampshire, but less than those of Massachusetts, Vermont and Connecticut. However, the average SAT score for public school students in Rhode Island trailed each of the other New England states, aside from Maine (which requires all public school students to take the SAT, potentially lowering average scores). Similarly, a greater percentage of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Rhode Island scored *below basic* on the NAEP reading and mathematics examinations than any of the other New England states (the same percentage of students in Connecticut did so on the mathematics test). Furthermore, a lower percentage of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Rhode Island scored *at or above proficient* on the NAEP tests than in any of the other New England states.

One factor often cited as contributing to Rhode Island’s relatively poor performance on many standardized tests is the demographic composition of the state’s students. However, an analysis

of several important socio-economic factors indicates that Rhode Island’s students are similar demographically to those in Massachusetts, as well as nationally. For example, 6.6 percent of students in Rhode Island participated in English Language Learner (ELL) programs during the 2013-2014 school year. By comparison, 8.9 percent of students nationally participated in ELL programs, as well as 7.4 percent of students in Massachusetts.

In terms of racial and ethnic composition, a similar percentage of students in Rhode Island and Massachusetts are members of a minority group. During the 2013-2014 school year, 62.1 percent of Rhode Island students were white, while 37.9 percent were a minority. In Massachusetts, 64.9 percent of students were white and 35.1 percent of students were a minority. Nationally, 50.5 percent of students were white and 49.5 percent of students were a minority. As these data indicate, there are not substantial differences between Rhode Island and Massachusetts with regards to the racial composition of students.

**Table 2**  
**Selected Socio-Economic Factors**  
**New England and United States Averages**

State	English Language Learners 2013-14	Free/Reduced Lunch 2013-14	% of Families Below Poverty 2014	% of Adults w/ Bachelor+ 2014	Minority Students 2013-2014
U.S. Average*	8.9%	49.9%	18.0%	30.1%	49.5%
Connecticut	5.7%	37.1%	12.4%	38.0%	41.5%
Maine	2.8%	44.0%	17.9%	29.4%	5.4%
Massachusetts	7.4%	38.2%	13.2%	41.2%	35.1%
New Hampshire	1.9%	27.7%	11.0%	35.0%	11.5%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>46.2%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>38.5%</b>
Vermont	1.5%	37.9%	14.2%	34.9%	4.9%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia.  
 Note: Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of four in 2010 was \$22,050; in 2014, it was \$23,850.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau; National Center for Education Statistics; RIPEC calculations

Although similar on many socio-economic measures, Rhode Island and Massachusetts are dissimilar on other measures. One common measure used as a proxy for poverty levels among students is eligibility for the federal free and reduced lunch (FRL) program. During the 2013-2014 school year, 46.2 percent of Rhode Island students were eligible for the FRL program, compared to 38.2 percent of students in Massachusetts and 49.9 percent of students nationally. Similarly, 17.9 percent of Rhode Island families with related children under 18 years of age were classified as living below the federal poverty line in 2014, a level similar to the national average of 18.0 percent. However, this is higher than the 13.2 percent of Massachusetts families with related children under 18 years of age that were living below the poverty line in 2014.

After examining the overall portrait of student performance, education expenditures and student demographics, it becomes clear that Rhode Island’s public school system is underperforming in comparison to the other New England states. Although there are some notable differences in

expenditure levels and demographic characteristics, these factors are not sufficient to fully explain the vast differences in student performance. The results from Rhode Island and Massachusetts on the 2015 PARCC assessment are particularly noteworthy; the percentage of Massachusetts students meeting expectations on both the English language arts/literacy and mathematics portions of the exam were approximately double the percentage doing so in Rhode Island.

If Rhode Island aspires to reach the levels of success demonstrated by the Massachusetts public school system, it must take steps to replicate the proven reforms adopted by that state. During the 1990s, Massachusetts adopted a comprehensive education reform agenda that empowered the leadership of individual schools, introduced high-stakes testing requirements and made changes to how schools are financed, among other changes. Because Massachusetts' public schools are now considered to be among the best in the nation, and arguably the world, it makes sense for Rhode Island to try to emulate the reforms that have worked so well in Massachusetts. A separate RIPEC report titled "Understanding Institutional Differences in Education Governance: A Comparison of Massachusetts and Rhode Island" more fully explores the differences in education governance between Rhode Island and Massachusetts.



### III. Student Performance

#### Highlights

- Rhode Island's 2015 mean score on the SAT is below the national average, as well as every other state in the New England region except Maine.
- Rhode Island's 2015 mean score on the ACT is the lowest in the region, though it is higher than the national average.
- On the 2015 NAEP reading assessment, the percentage of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders that scored *at or above proficient* was five percentage points above the national average, but lower than every New England state except Maine. Among 8<sup>th</sup> graders, the percentage of Rhode Island students that scored *at or above proficient* was the lowest in the region, but two percentage points above the national average.
- The performance of Rhode Island students on the NAEP reading assessment has improved since 2005, especially among 4<sup>th</sup> graders – the mean score grew by 9 points between 2005 and 2015, representing the greatest improvement in the region.
- On the 2015 NAEP mathematics assessment, the percentage of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders that scored *at or above proficient* was the lowest in New England. Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders also underperformed the national average score, while 8<sup>th</sup> graders performed at the national average score.
- On the 2015 PARCC ELA/literacy exam, Rhode Island is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of a total of 10 states in terms of the percent of students that *met expectations*, outperforming Arkansas, Mississippi, and New Mexico. On the Mathematics assessment, Rhode Island is ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, outperforming Arkansas and New Mexico.
- Within Rhode Island, there is a great degree of variation in student performance across individual districts. Average total SAT scores, for example, range from a high of 1723 in Barrington to a low of 1120 in Central Falls. The urban core districts of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket consistently score in the bottom four on the SAT, NECAP, and PARCC assessments.

#### State to State Comparison

The following analysis compares Rhode Island student performance with the five other New England states and the national average on the SAT, ACT, and the NAEP. Data are from the College Board, which administers the SAT; ACT, Inc., which administers the ACT; and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), which administers the NAEP. All results are from the most recent testing year, which is explained within the discussion of each assessment.

## The SAT

The SAT, formerly called the Scholastic Assessment Test, is a voluntary college entrance exam primarily taken by high school juniors and seniors. SAT scores are intended to provide an objective evaluation of an individual applicant's verbal and mathematics scores and are thus an important part of the application process for many colleges and universities. This analysis includes the writing assessment, which was first administered in 2006; the College Board announced early in 2014 that the writing section would become optional beginning in 2016.

The College Board, which administers the test, discourages comparisons between states on SAT scores alone, as participation rates vary drastically between states and scores have been demonstrated to be linked to 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 average test scores compared to prior years.

It is also important to note that SAT scores suffer from selection bias, since most students who take the test select to do so. 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 most of the local colleges require the SAT for admission, and/or where a greater portion of students take the test, the testing population tends to include students with a wider range of academic backgrounds and the average score tends to fall closer to the national average. In other words, the population of SAT test takers is not necessarily representative of a school's, district's or state's student body overall; therefore, aggregate results of test performance do not reflect the educational attainment or abilities of all students in a school, district or state.

In 2015, Rhode Island students at all schools (including public, private and religious schools) received an average score of 494 in reading, 494 in mathematics and 484 in writing for an average composite score of 1472. This was the second-lowest overall average score among the New England states, ahead of Maine's average score of 1392. Rhode Island's 2015 average composite score is also 18 points below the national average score of 1490. Rhode Island's average score of 494 on the reading section is one point below the national average of 495 and the state's average score of 484 on the writing section is the same as the national average. By contrast, Rhode Island's average score of 494 on the mathematics section is 17 points below the national average of 511.

Since 2010, Rhode Island's mean composite score has declined by five points, possibly due to gradually increasing participation rates. However, it should also be noted that Rhode Island's average score trails that of Connecticut and Massachusetts, each of which had a higher participation rate in 2015. Between 2010 and 2015, the national average composite score has declined by 16 points; notably, Connecticut's average composite score declined by 22 points during the same period. Table 3 displays 2015 average SAT scores and participation rates for each of the New England states, as well as the national averages.

**Table 3**  
**Overall Mean SAT Scores and Participation Rates, 2010-2015**

State	Part. Rate 2015	2015 Mean Scores*				Part. Rate 2014	1-year change (from 2014*)				Part. Rate 2010	5-year change (from 2010*)			
		Read	Math	Write	Total		Read	Math	Write	Total		Read	Math	Write	Total
U.S. Average	52%	495	511	484	1490	52%	-2	-2	-3	-7	47%	-5	-4	-7	-16
Connecticut	89%	504	506	504	1514	88%	-3	-4	-4	-11	84%	-5	-8	-9	-22
Maine	96%	468	473	451	1392	96%	1	2	2	5	92%	0	6	-3	3
Massachusetts	86%	516	529	507	1552	84%	0	-2	-2	-4	86%	4	3	-2	5
New Hampshire	70%	525	530	511	1566	70%	1	0	-1	0	77%	5	6	1	12
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-5</b>
Vermont	61%	523	524	507	1554	63%	1	-1	0	0	66%	4	3	1	8

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

\*Data is for students graduating in the academic year listed.

Source: The College Board; WICHE Graduation Estimates; RIPEC calculations

## The ACT

The ACT is a second voluntary college entrance exam taken primarily by high school juniors and seniors. Scores on the ACT can be used to measure an individual's aptitude in four key subjects – English, mathematics, reading, and science (a writing section is optional) – and are therefore often used by colleges and universities in tandem with, or in lieu of, the SAT during the application process. In addition, the ACT utilizes benchmarks developed in collaboration with colleges and universities to estimate the college readiness of test-takers. Scores on each of the four sections of the ACT range from 1 to 36 points and a composite score representing the average of the four sections rounded up to the nearest integer is also generated.

As with the SAT, the ACT test-taking population is largely self-selected, as the test is taken only by those students who choose to do so.<sup>1</sup> This impacts the composition of the group of test-takers and can result in differences in scores between states. Similar to the SAT, states with a higher participation rate on the ACT will generally have lower average test scores than states with lower participation rates and vice versa. As a result, some caution should be taken in comparing average ACT scores between different states. Results on the ACT test do not necessarily reflect the educational attainment of all students in a school, district, or state.

The 2015 national participation rate for the ACT was 59.0 percent, while participation rates in the six New England states ranged from a low of 10.0 percent in Maine to a high of 32.0 percent in Connecticut. In Rhode Island, the ACT participation rate has increased from 11.0 percent in 2010 to 19.0 percent in 2015. Maine's low ACT participation rate can likely be attributed to the mandatory requirement that students take the SAT, because only a small percentage of students choose to take both tests. Between 2010 and 2015, the participation rate nationally increased from 47.0 percent to 59.0 percent. As this data indicate, a higher percentage of students

<sup>1</sup> 12 states, located primarily in the Midwest and South, require all graduating seniors to take the ACT. No New England states are included in this group.

nationally take the ACT than the SAT; this is not true in the six New England states, each of which has a higher participation rate for the SAT.

**Table 4**  
**Overall Mean ACT Scores and Participation Rates, 2010-2015**

State	Part. Rate 2015	2015 Mean Raw Scores*					Part. Rate 2014	1-year change (from 2014*)					Part. Rate 2010	5-year change (from 2010*)				
		English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite		English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite		English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
U.S. Average	59%	20.4	20.8	21.4	20.9	21.0	57%	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	47%	-0.1	-0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Connecticut	32%	24.5	24.1	24.7	23.8	24.4	29%	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	24%	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.7
Maine	10%	24.2	23.9	24.6	23.6	24.2	9%	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.6	10%	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0
Massachusetts	28%	24.2	24.6	24.6	23.8	24.4	23%	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	21%	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.4
New Hampshire	23%	24.1	24.1	24.7	23.9	24.3	20%	0.2	-0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	17%	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.6
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Vermont	29%	23.2	23.0	24.1	23.2	23.5	29%	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.3	26%	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3

Note: ACT scores are for public, private and religious schools.  
 \*Data for students graduating in the academic year provided  
 Source: ACT, Inc. and RIPEC calculations

Rhode Island’s average composite score of 23.1 in 2015 was the lowest among the six New England states, but was greater than the national average composite score of 21.0. Similarly, the state’s average scores in each of the four component sections that comprise the ACT were also the lowest in New England, though each was also greater than the national average. Since 2010, Rhode Island students have improved their average composite score by 0.3 points, compared to no change in the national average composite score. The average score on each of the four sections in Rhode Island also increased over the same time period. Table 4 displays average ACT scores and participation rates for each of the New England states, as well as the national averages.

### 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, all states receiving Title I funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are required to test 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in reading and mathematics every two years as a means to verify the adequacy of state tests used for the assessment provisions of the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* enacted in 2015. As a result, the NAEP results reflect testing at public schools only. Participation in tests on other subjects, such as science and writing, is at the discretion of each state. For a more detailed description of the exam, please consult the glossary at the end of this 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 (i.e. 4<sup>th</sup> graders) and subgroups within those populations (i.e. female students, Hispanic students, etc.).

NAEP 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 most recent NAEP tests were conducted in the winter of 2015, at which time performance in reading and mathematics was assessed for grades 4 and 8 in all states. This report does not include results from the science or writing assessments because the most recent data available is from the 2011 assessment.

### Reading – 4th Grade

Rhode Island’s average 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading score of 225 in 2015 represents a two point decline from the previous test administered in 2013, but a nine point improvement from ten years prior in 2005. The state’s 2015 average score was four points greater than the national average; however, it was also the second-lowest average score in New England, ahead of Maine. Among the New England states, Massachusetts had the highest average score in 2015 (235), followed by New Hampshire (232) and Vermont (230).

Another measure of student performance is the percentage of students in each proficiency category. The percentage of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders who scored *at or above proficient* on the 2015 NAEP reading assessment – 40.0 percent – was ten percentage points greater than in 2005, and five percentage points greater than the United States national average in 2015. Rhode Island’s increase in this category between 2005 and 2015 was the greatest in New England; however, the percentage of students scoring *at or above proficient* is still the second-lowest in the region.

During the same ten-year period from 2005 to 2015, Rhode Island has seen a ten percentage point decline in those students scoring *below basic*, from 38.0 percent to 28.0 percent. Nationally, the percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students scoring in this category declined six percentage points, from 38.0 percent in 2005 to 32.0 percent in 2015. While the percentage of students in Rhode Island who tested in the *below basic* range in 2015 (28.0 percent) was less than the national average (32.0 percent), it was higher than the rest of the states in the New England region except Maine (29.0 percent).

### Reading – 8th Grade

Between 2005 and 2015, average NAEP reading assessment scores for 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Rhode Island have increased by four points from 261 to 265, while the national score has also increased four points from 260 to 264. Although Rhode Island’s average score is the lowest in New England in 2015, it is also one point greater than the national average score. Over the ten-years

from 2005 to 2015, Maine was the only New England state to experience a decline in mean scaled scores (2 points), while Connecticut had the largest increase in the region (nine points). After a five point increase between 2005 and 2015, New Hampshire has the highest average 8<sup>th</sup> grading reading score in New England in 2015 (275), followed by Massachusetts and Vermont (274).

As stated above, another measure of student achievement is the percentage of students scoring in each category. The percentage of Rhode Island 8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *at or above proficient* increased from 29.0 percent in 2005 to 35.0 percent in 2015, while the percentage scoring *below basic* declined from 29.0 percent to 24.0 percent. While Rhode Island's scores have remained comparable to the national average since 2005, the Ocean State has underperformed on the NAEP 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading categories when compared to the other New England states. The percentage of Rhode Island 8<sup>th</sup> graders who scored *at or above proficient* in reading was eleven percentage points lower than Massachusetts, ten percentage points lower than New Hampshire, and nine percentage points lower than Vermont in 2015.

Grade 4													
State	Score				Percentage								
	2005	2013	2015	Change 05-15	2005			2013			2015		
					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*	217	221	221	4	38%	62%	30%	33%	67%	34%	32%	68%	35%
Connecticut	226	230	229	3	29%	71%	38%	24%	76%	43%	26%	74%	43%
Maine	225	225	224	-1	29%	71%	35%	29%	71%	37%	29%	71%	36%
Massachusetts	231	232	235	4	22%	78%	44%	21%	79%	47%	18%	82%	50%
New Hampshire	227	232	232	5	26%	74%	39%	20%	80%	45%	21%	79%	46%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Vermont	227	228	230	3	28%	72%	39%	25%	75%	42%	24%	76%	45%

Grade 8													
State	Score				Percentage								
	2005	2013	2015	Change 05-15	2005			2013			2015		
					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*	260	266	264	4	29%	71%	29%	23%	77%	34%	25%	75%	33%
Connecticut	264	274	273	9	26%	74%	34%	17%	83%	45%	18%	82%	43%
Maine	270	269	268	-2	19%	81%	38%	21%	79%	38%	19%	81%	36%
Massachusetts	274	277	274	0	17%	83%	44%	16%	84%	48%	17%	83%	46%
New Hampshire	270	274	275	5	20%	80%	38%	16%	84%	44%	15%	85%	45%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>35%</b>
Vermont	269	274	274	5	21%	79%	37%	16%	84%	45%	17%	83%	44%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia  
 Note: Values may not add to 100% due to rounding; all scores presented are for public schools only.  
 Source: National Center for Education Statistics - The Nation's Report Card - Reading, RIPEC Calculations

### Mathematics – 4th Grade

On the NAEP mathematics assessment, Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders improved their average score by five points from 233 to 238 between 2005 and 2015. Despite this improvement, the state's average score was still the lowest in New England in 2015. Furthermore, Rhode Island's average score continues to be below the national average score of 240. Among the New England states,

Massachusetts has the highest average score in 2015 (251), followed by New Hampshire (249) and Vermont (243).

In 2015, 37.0 percent of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored *at or above proficient*, compared to the national average of 39.0 percent. Rhode Island is the only state in New England with less than 40.0 percent of students scoring proficient. The percentage of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders achieving the rank of *at or above proficient* does represent an improvement of six percentage points since 2005, though it also represents a decline of five percentage points since 2013. It should be noted that the percentage of students achieving proficiency also declined nationally, as well as in each New England state, between 2013 and 2015.

<b>Grade 4</b>													
State	Score				Percentage								
	2005	2013	2015	Change 05-15	2005			2013			2015		
					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*	237	241	240	3	21%	79%	35%	18%	82%	41%	19%	81%	39%
Connecticut	242	243	240	-2	16%	84%	42%	17%	83%	45%	19%	81%	41%
Maine	241	246	242	1	16%	84%	39%	12%	88%	47%	15%	85%	41%
Massachusetts	247	253	251	4	9%	91%	49%	10%	90%	58%	10%	90%	54%
New Hampshire	246	253	249	3	11%	89%	47%	7%	93%	59%	9%	91%	51%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>37%</b>
Vermont	244	248	243	-1	13%	87%	44%	13%	87%	52%	15%	85%	43%

<b>Grade 8</b>													
State	Score				Percentage								
	2005	2013	2015	Change 05-15	2005			2013			2015		
					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*	278	284	281	3	32%	68%	28%	27%	73%	34%	30%	70%	32%
Connecticut	281	285	284	3	30%	70%	35%	26%	74%	37%	28%	72%	36%
Maine	281	289	285	4	26%	74%	30%	22%	78%	40%	24%	76%	35%
Massachusetts	292	301	297	5	20%	80%	43%	14%	86%	55%	19%	81%	51%
New Hampshire	285	296	294	9	23%	77%	35%	16%	84%	47%	16%	84%	46%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Vermont	287	295	290	3	22%	78%	38%	16%	84%	47%	21%	79%	42%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia  
 Note: Values may not add to 100% due to rounding; all scores presented are for public schools only.  
 Source: National Center for Education Statistics - The Nation's Report Card - Mathematics, RIPEC Calculations

Similarly, there is a gap between Rhode Island and its neighboring states with regard to the percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *below basic* in 2015. In 2015, 20.0 percent of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored *below basic*, compared to 19.0 percent nationally. Rhode Island has the greatest percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *below basic* among the six New England states. By contrast, 9.0 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in New Hampshire scored *below basic* in 2015, along with 10.0 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Massachusetts. However, the percentage of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *below basic* has declined by four percentage points between 2005 and 2015.

## Mathematics – Eighth Grade

As with 4<sup>th</sup> graders, Rhode Island 8<sup>th</sup> graders tend to underperform their peers in the other New England states in mathematics. However, the state's average score of 281 was equal to the national average, and represented an improvement of nine points from 2005. Among the New England states, 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Massachusetts had the highest average score in 2015 (297), followed by New Hampshire (294) and Vermont (290). Notably, the nine point increase in Rhode Island's average score was, along with New Hampshire, the greatest increase in New England between 2005 and 2015.

The gap between Rhode Island and its neighboring states is also clear when comparing the percentage of students who scored *at or above proficient* and the percentage of students who scored *below basic*. In 2015, 32.0 percent of Rhode Island 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored *at or above proficient*. While this represents an increase of eight percentage points since 2005 and matches the national average, the state continues to trail its neighboring states; no other state in New England had a proficiency rate below 35.0 percent. In addition, Rhode Island continues to have a higher percentage of students scoring *below basic* on 8<sup>th</sup> grade math (28.0 percent) than its neighboring states, aside from Connecticut, which also had 28.0 percent in 2015.

### **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers**

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is composed of a voluntary cooperative initiative by eleven states (Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio and Rhode Island) and the District of Columbia to uniformly assess the higher level academic achievement required for student collegiate and career goals. Tests are designed to be administered annually with English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics exams in grades 3 through 8, and high school. While Rhode Island is still transitioning to the new statewide assessment, the PARCC exams were administered for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year. Students in grades 4, 8 and 11 will continue taking the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) examination in science; these results are found in the Rhode Island District Performance section of this report.

With testing dates available both in the spring and fall, students are evaluated using either computer-based or paper-based testing across foundational English language arts and mathematical topics. While all assessments are designed to test the student's knowledge and comprehension of grade-level appropriate subject matter, PARCC was developed in part by universities and colleges to close readiness gaps as students prepare for college careers.

PARCC test results are expressed in terms of the percentage of students that fall into five achievement categories, which are as follows:

- *Exceeded Expectations* (Level 5)
- *Met Expectations* (Level 4)
- *Approached Expectations* (Level 3)
- *Partially Met Expectations* (Level 2)
- *Did Not Yet Meet Expectations* (Level 1)



While the PARCC exam aggregates student performance into general categories of assessment (e.g. reading, writing, etc.), it also provides individual students and their parents/guardians a more detailed breakdown of the student’s performance on various parts of the test (e.g. vocabulary, writing expression, literary text). However, the following data includes only the percent of students, both statewide and by district, that meet/do not meet expectations. Students achieving levels 1, 2 or 3 are considered “not meeting expectations” while students in levels 4 and 5 are considered “meeting expectations”.

**Table 7**  
**2015 Statewide PARCC Results (Grades 3-8)**

State	<u>ELA/Literacy</u>		<u>Mathematics*</u>	
	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations
Arkansas	32.5%	67.5%	24.0%	76.0%
Colorado	39.7%	60.3%	29.9%	70.1%
Illinois	38.1%	61.9%	29.4%	70.6%
Louisiana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	38.9%	61.1%	29.0%	71.0%
Massachusetts	59.9%	40.1%	51.5%	48.5%
Mississippi	29.7%	70.3%	26.4%	73.6%
New Jersey	50.0%	50.0%	39.2%	60.8%
New Mexico	21.2%	78.8%	16.9%	83.1%
Ohio	41.8%	58.2%	34.9%	65.1%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>73.7%</b>
<i>Average</i>	<i>38.9%</i>	<i>61.1%</i>	<i>30.8%</i>	<i>69.3%</i>

\*Mathematics results do not include students that took the Algebra I assessment in grade 8.  
 Note: "Met Expectations" represents percentage of students achieving levels 4 or 5; data was unavailable for Louisiana at the time of publication.  
 SOURCE: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers; Various state departments of education; RIPEC calculations

In 2015, 36.8 percent of Rhode Island students in grades 3 through 8 met or exceeded expectations on the ELA/literacy portion of the spring 2015 PARCC assessment. By contrast, 59.9 percent of Massachusetts students in the same grades met or exceeded expectations. It should be noted, however, that Massachusetts school districts had the option to continue taking the state’s existing standardized test, known as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Among the 11 states that administered the PARCC assessment in spring 2015, an average of 38.9 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 met or exceeded expectations. The percentage of students doing so in Rhode Island was greater than in Arkansas, Mississippi and New Mexico, but trailed Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ohio. Data for Louisiana was not available at the time that this report was published.

On the mathematics portion of the spring 2015 PARCC assessment, 26.3 percent of Rhode Island students in grades 3 through 8 met or exceeded expectations. This compares to 51.5 percent of Massachusetts students in the same grades that did so, and an average of 30.8 percent of students in the 11 states that administered the PARCC assessment in spring 2015. Among the 11 states, the percentage of Rhode Island students that met or exceeded expectations was greater than in

Arkansas and New Mexico, but trailed Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey and Ohio. It should be noted that these figures do not include results from students that took the Algebra I assessment in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Rhode Island District Performance

### Scholastic Assessment Test

Table 8 displays average SAT scores by Rhode Island public school district. It should be noted that the statewide average scores presented in this section will vary from those presented earlier, which included 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 average scores.

School District	2014-2015 Results				2013-2014 Results				2009-2010 Results				1-Year Change (from 2013-2014)				5-Year Change (from 2009-2010)			
	Read	Math	Write	Total	Read	Math	Write	Total	Read	Math	Write	Total	Read	Math	Write	Total	Read	Math	Write	Total
<i>Urban Core</i>																				
Central Falls	365	398	357	1120	394	425	404	1223	390	374	383	1147	-29	-27	-47	-103	-25	24	-26	-27
Newport	468	460	460	1388	483	465	460	1408	450	453	451	1354	-15	-5	0	-20	18	7	9	34
Pawtucket	405	406	395	1206	416	420	401	1237	420	437	413	1270	-11	-14	-6	-31	-15	-31	-18	-64
Providence	407	406	394	1207	408	409	399	1216	408	406	400	1214	-1	-3	-5	-9	-1	0	-6	-7
Woonsocket	449	448	431	1328	454	461	435	1350	465	469	453	1387	-5	-13	-4	-22	-16	-21	-22	-59
<i>Urban Ring</i>																				
Cranston	477	475	466	1418	487	484	475	1446	491	493	485	1469	-10	-9	-9	-28	-14	-18	-19	-51
East Providence	468	468	446	1382	465	484	449	1398	467	477	458	1402	3	-16	-3	-16	1	-9	-12	-20
North Providence	468	460	463	1391	470	472	464	1406	469	471	463	1403	-2	-12	-1	-15	-1	-11	0	-12
Warwick	502	484	487	1473	497	482	484	1463	488	489	486	1463	5	2	3	10	14	-5	1	10
West Warwick	473	458	464	1395	458	453	449	1360	470	465	470	1405	15	5	15	35	3	-7	-6	-10
<i>Suburban</i>																				
Barrington	573	588	562	1723	578	588	566	1732	570	589	563	1722	-5	0	-4	-9	3	-1	-1	1
Bristol-Warren	537	527	542	1606	510	495	510	1515	476	491	473	1440	27	32	32	91	61	36	69	166
Cumberland	496	508	482	1486	501	499	486	1486	520	514	509	1543	-5	9	-4	0	-24	-6	-27	-57
East Greenwich	568	572	556	1696	576	598	582	1756	591	602	597	1790	-8	-26	-26	-60	-23	-30	-41	-94
Johnston	460	450	449	1359	448	448	443	1339	447	451	448	1346	12	2	6	20	13	-1	1	13
Lincoln	521	527	508	1556	521	533	502	1556	525	522	520	1567	0	-6	6	0	-4	5	-12	-11
Middletown	509	531	494	1534	515	535	505	1555	519	527	503	1549	-6	-4	-11	-21	-10	4	-9	-15
Narragansett	527	543	522	1592	518	528	510	1556	532	541	525	1598	9	15	12	36	-5	2	-3	-6
North Kingstown	543	540	525	1608	547	544	531	1622	531	535	524	1590	-4	-4	-6	-14	12	5	1	18
Portsmouth	536	538	526	1600	537	542	505	1584	518	530	518	1566	-1	-4	21	16	18	8	8	34
Smithfield	494	504	480	1478	500	516	491	1507	498	500	491	1489	-6	-12	-11	-29	-4	4	-11	-11
Westerly	502	517	487	1506	498	501	490	1489	495	502	484	1481	4	16	-3	17	7	15	3	25
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>																				
Burrillville	494	503	483	1480	475	483	471	1429	509	516	494	1519	19	20	12	51	-15	-13	-11	-39
Chariho	514	499	501	1514	516	512	501	1529	502	514	500	1516	-2	-13	0	-15	12	-15	1	-2
Coventry	473	481	459	1413	483	477	476	1436	489	492	482	1463	-10	4	-17	-23	-16	-11	-23	-50
Exeter-West Greenwich	525	512	509	1546	537	522	516	1575	536	522	530	1588	-12	-10	-7	-29	-11	-10	-21	-42
Foster-Glocester	499	493	483	1475	520	513	503	1536	529	517	520	1566	-21	-20	-20	-61	-30	-24	-37	-91
New Shoreham	517	492	489	1498	583	540	510	1633	535	500	505	1540	-66	-48	-21	-135	-18	-8	-16	-42
North Smithfield	523	539	511	1573	513	526	503	1542	518	527	510	1555	10	13	8	31	5	12	1	18
Scituate	481	534	522	1537	518	519	505	1542	526	530	517	1573	-37	15	17	-5	-45	4	5	-36
South Kingstown	551	572	543	1666	550	554	533	1637	546	553	535	1634	1	18	10	29	5	19	8	32
Tiverton	467	464	450	1381	498	499	483	1480	490	490	486	1466	-31	-35	-33	-99	-23	-26	-36	-85
<b>Rhode Island Average</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>1429</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-22</b>
<b>United States Average</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1462</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>1471</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-35</b>

Note: Rhode Island and United States average scores are for public school students only; figures may not sum due to rounding.  
SOURCE: R.I. Department of Education, College Board, "Rhode Island Public Schools Education Indicators" (various years), and RIPEC calculations

Rhode Island's statewide average SAT score for public school students in 2015 was 1429, while the national average was 1462. A large portion of the difference between the two scores is the result of a 17-point gap on the mathematics section of the test; the average score in Rhode Island was 481, compared to the national average of 498. However, Rhode Island public school students also scored below the national average on the reading and writing sections of the test. Since 2010, the statewide average SAT score in Rhode Island has declined by 22 points, while the national average score has declined by 35 points.

In 2015, the Rhode Island public school districts with the highest average SAT scores were Barrington (1723), East Greenwich (1696), South Kingstown (1666), North Kingstown (1608) and Bristol-Warren (1606). The districts with the lowest average SAT scores were Central Falls (1120), Pawtucket (1206), Providence (1207), Woonsocket (1328) and Johnston (1359). Between 2014 and 2015, the districts with the greatest increase in average SAT scores were Bristol-Warren (91 points), Burrillville (51 points), Narragansett (36 points), West Warwick (35 points) and North Smithfield (31 points).

Over the five year period from 2010 to 2015, the Rhode Island public school districts with the greatest increase in average SAT scores were Bristol-Warren (166 points), Newport and Portsmouth (34 points), South Kingstown (32 points) and Westerly (25 points). The five school districts with the greatest decrease in average SAT scores were East Greenwich (94 points), Foster-Glocester (91 points), Tiverton (85 points), Pawtucket (64 points) and Woonsocket (59 points).

### **New England Common Assessment Program**

The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) was the statewide assessment tool used by Rhode Island prior to the PARCC assessment. Although NECAP has now been replaced by the PARCC assessment for reading, writing and mathematics, it will continue to be used to assess students' progress in science in grades 4, 8 and 11. The NECAP was developed by the RIDE, in partnership with the Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont departments of education. New Hampshire and Vermont, in addition to Rhode Island, will continue to administer the NECAP science assessment to students each spring. Students scoring levels 3 or 4 (out of 4) are considered to have scored *at or above proficient* on the assessment. For the district-level data provided below, it should be noted that scores for students placed outside of a district will be reflected in their home district's average score.

On the most recent NECAP science assessment administered in 2015, 40 percent of Rhode Island 4<sup>th</sup> graders statewide scored *at or above proficient*, compared to 49 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in New Hampshire and 46 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Vermont. The Rhode Island public school districts with the greatest percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *at or above proficient* were Chariho (77 percent), East Greenwich and North Kingstown (70 percent), Scituate (69 percent) and Narragansett (67 percent). The school districts with the least percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *at or above proficient* were Woonsocket (14 percent), Central Falls (15 percent), Providence (16 percent), Pawtucket (17 percent) and West Warwick (27 percent).

**Table 9**  
**Grades 4, 8 and 11 NECAP Science Assessment 2011, 2013 and 2015**

School District	Grade 4			Grade 8			Grade 11		
	Spring 2011	Spring 2013	Spring 2015	Spring 2011	Spring 2013	Spring 2015	Spring 2011	Spring 2013	Spring 2015
<i>Urban Core</i>									
Central Falls	21%	21%	15%	3%	8%	2%	6%	8%	9%
Newport	40%	39%	47%	18%	25%	17%	12%	31%	20%
Pawtucket	24%	26%	17%	8%	5%	3%	10%	13%	13%
Providence	17%	18%	16%	6%	9%	5%	7%	9%	10%
Woonsocket	28%	19%	14%	5%	6%	9%	10%	15%	22%
<i>Urban Ring</i>									
Cranston	52%	45%	47%	26%	32%	24%	24%	31%	32%
East Providence	35%	34%	32%	25%	16%	16%	28%	41%	32%
North Providence	41%	39%	43%	10%	10%	7%	18%	27%	27%
Warwick	42%	40%	40%	22%	22%	12%	16%	20%	23%
West Warwick	35%	34%	27%	15%	17%	12%	15%	29%	11%
<i>Suburban</i>									
Barrington	65%	68%	60%	69%	72%	63%	57%	57%	70%
Bristol-Warren	46%	52%	62%	25%	31%	24%	37%	42%	37%
Cumberland	52%	39%	55%	33%	43%	33%	29%	34%	34%
East Greenwich	80%	60%	70%	53%	76%	57%	61%	67%	63%
Jamestown (Grades 4 and 8)	77%	66%	64%	63%	60%	39%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Johnston	60%	53%	50%	27%	22%	22%	19%	23%	26%
Lincoln	67%	57%	54%	34%	34%	33%	31%	44%	56%
Middletown	38%	52%	45%	38%	35%	18%	43%	46%	43%
Narragansett	65%	61%	67%	42%	56%	48%	41%	50%	49%
North Kingstown	62%	64%	70%	58%	56%	45%	29%	42%	53%
Portsmouth	58%	55%	52%	43%	49%	46%	55%	50%	60%
Smithfield	74%	62%	61%	49%	46%	41%	45%	58%	43%
Westerly	65%	64%	56%	41%	50%	43%	44%	42%	40%
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>									
Burrillville	54%	42%	35%	23%	45%	34%	25%	21%	32%
Chariho	80%	72%	77%	35%	57%	62%	38%	41%	46%
Coventry	56%	53%	50%	40%	48%	27%	30%	41%	39%
Exeter-West Greenwich	46%	56%	57%	3400%	51%	44%	45%	53%	53%
Foster (Grade 4)	67%	58%	32%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Foster-Glocester (Grades 8 and 11)	N/A	N/A	N/A	30%	28%	22%	32%	36%	31%
Glocester (Grade 4)	59%	39%	61%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Little Compton (Grades 4 and 8)	71%	64%	60%	36%	41%	48%	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Shoreham (Grades 4 and 11)	46%	50%	60%	N/A	N/A	N/A	39%	62%	48%
North Smithfield	57%	53%	65%	31%	53%	37%	25%	32%	70%
Scituate	65%	76%	69%	37%	52%	33%	51%	50%	35%
South Kingstown	69%	64%	66%	57%	57%	39%	51%	51%	59%
Tiverton	56%	57%	47%	19%	36%	31%	39%	45%	41%
<b>RI State Average</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>NH State Average</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>VT State Average</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>

NOTE: Figures presented are the percentage of students achieving proficiency (scoring levels 3 or 4); totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Rhode Island Department of Education

22 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Rhode Island scored *at or above proficient* on the 2015 NECAP science assessment, compared to 25 percent in New Hampshire and 24 percent in Vermont. The Rhode Island public school districts with the greatest percentage of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students scoring *at or above proficient* were Barrington (63 percent), Chariho (62 percent), East Greenwich (57 percent), Little Compton and Narragansett (48 percent). The districts with the least percentage of

8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *at or above proficient* were Central Falls (2 percent), Pawtucket (3 percent), Providence (5 percent), North Providence (7 percent) and Woonsocket (9 percent).

Among 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, 32 percent scored *at or above proficient* in Rhode Island, compared to 34 percent in New Hampshire and 32 percent in Vermont. The Rhode Island public school districts with the greatest percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> graders scoring *at or above proficient* were North Smithfield and Barrington (70 percent), East Greenwich (63 percent), Portsmouth (60 percent) and South Kingstown (59 percent). The school districts with the least percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students scoring *at or above proficient* were Central Falls (9 percent), Providence (10 percent), West Warwick (11 percent), Pawtucket (13 percent) and Newport (20 percent).

### **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers**

Performance on the 2015 PARCC ELA/literacy and mathematics assessments varied greatly among Rhode Island public school districts. On the ELA/literacy portion of the assessment, Barrington (70.9 percent) had the greatest percentage of students in grades 3 through 10 meet expectations, followed by East Greenwich (69.8 percent) and Jamestown (61.4 percent). Central Falls (9.9 percent) had the smallest percentage of students meet expectations in ELA/Literacy, followed by Providence (17.8 percent) and Pawtucket (19.9 percent).

On the mathematics portion of the PARCC assessment, East Greenwich (57.6 percent) had the greatest percentage of students in grades 3 through 10 meet expectations, followed by Barrington (57.0 percent) and Jamestown (53.7 percent). Central Falls (5.2 percent) had the smallest percentage of students meet expectations in Mathematics, followed by Providence (9.8 percent) and Woonsocket (12.1 percent). Table 10 displays each public school district's results on the ELA/Literacy and mathematics portions of the 2015 PARCC assessment.

Statewide, 37.5 percent of students in elementary schools met expectations on the ELA/literacy portion of the PARCC assessment, while 62.5 percent did not. Similarly, 36.3 percent of middle school students met expectations on the ELA/literacy assessment, while 63.7 percent did not. For high school students, 32.0 percent met expectations on the ELA/literacy assessment, while 68.0 percent did not. On the mathematics assessment, 30.2 percent of elementary school students met expectations, while 69.8 percent did not. Among middle school students, 25.6 percent of students met expectations on the mathematics assessment, while 74.4 percent did not. Finally, 12.4 percent of high school students met expectations on the mathematics assessment, while 87.6 percent did not.

**Table 10**  
**2015 PARCC Results by RI Public School District**

School Districts	<u>ELA/Literacy</u>		<u>Mathematics</u>	
	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations
<i>Urban Core</i>				
Central Falls	9.9%	90.1%	5.2%	94.8%
Newport	31.9%	68.1%	20.6%	79.4%
Pawtucket	19.9%	80.1%	13.8%	86.2%
Providence	17.8%	82.2%	9.8%	90.2%
Woonsocket	20.3%	79.7%	12.1%	87.9%
<i>Urban Ring</i>				
Cranston	45.0%	55.0%	23.5%	76.5%
East Providence	31.9%	68.1%	22.9%	77.1%
North Providence	30.5%	69.5%	18.1%	81.9%
Warwick	31.8%	68.2%	21.8%	78.2%
West Warwick	30.6%	69.4%	21.6%	78.4%
<i>Suburban</i>				
Barrington	70.9%	29.1%	57.0%	43.0%
Bristol-Warren	40.9%	59.1%	34.5%	65.5%
Cumberland	42.2%	57.8%	36.7%	63.3%
East Greenwich	69.8%	30.2%	57.6%	42.4%
Jamestown	61.4%	38.6%	53.7%	46.3%
Johnston	46.6%	53.4%	24.6%	75.4%
Lincoln	51.4%	48.6%	35.0%	65.0%
Middletown	45.0%	55.0%	34.2%	65.8%
Narragansett	52.7%	47.3%	43.6%	56.4%
North Kingstown	55.9%	44.1%	44.4%	55.6%
Portsmouth	48.5%	51.5%	43.6%	56.4%
Smithfield	45.5%	54.5%	32.0%	68.0%
Westerly	34.6%	65.4%	25.4%	74.6%
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>				
Burrillville	29.6%	70.4%	19.7%	80.3%
Chariho	57.0%	43.0%	35.6%	64.4%
Coventry	34.4%	65.6%	26.4%	73.6%
Exeter-West Greenwich	50.1%	49.9%	48.0%	52.0%
Foster (Grades 3-5)	37.1%	62.9%	32.9%	67.1%
Foster-Glocester (Grades 6-12)	39.6%	60.4%	29.7%	70.3%
Glocester (Grades 3-5)	50.9%	49.1%	54.9%	45.1%
Little Compton	57.5%	42.5%	47.7%	52.3%
New Shoreham	60.0%	40.0%	38.8%	61.2%
North Smithfield	47.8%	52.2%	31.7%	68.3%
Scituate	41.7%	58.3%	36.7%	63.3%
South Kingstown	57.9%	42.1%	49.6%	50.4%
Tiverton	47.6%	52.4%	33.3%	66.7%
<b>RI Statewide Average</b>	<b>35.8%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>75.2%</b>
<i>Elementary Schools Average</i>	37.5%	62.5%	30.2%	69.8%
<i>Middle Schools Average</i>	36.3%	63.7%	25.6%	74.4%
<i>High Schools Average</i>	32.0%	68.0%	12.4%	87.6%

Note: Includes results for students in grades 3-10 for ELA/Literacy, as well as grades 3-8 and the Algebra I and Geometry assessments in Mathematics.

SOURCE: Rhode Island Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

## **IV. Student Demographics**

### **Highlights**

- Rhode Island and Maine have the highest levels of poverty in New England. The percentage of Rhode Island individuals and families living below the poverty line is on par with the national average.
- The percentage of Rhode Island adults with at least a high school diploma is the lowest in the region and slightly lower than the national average.
- Rhode Island has the second highest percentage of English Language Learners and special education students in New England, after Massachusetts.
- Just over 46 percent of Rhode Island students are eligible to participate in the free or reduced lunch program, which is the greatest percentage in New England, but below the national average of just under 50 percent.
- Within Rhode Island, the urban core districts of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket have the highest concentrations of English language learners and students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Central Falls and Woonsocket also have the highest concentration of students with an individualized education program, followed by New Shoreham and Johnston.

### **Overview**

When considering differences in student performance and achievement across districts within Rhode Island, as well as between Rhode Island as a whole and other states, demographic and economic factors such as poverty, language barriers or learning disabilities ought to be taken into consideration, as these factors can have profound impacts on student performance and the cost of education. In light of this, any analysis of standardized test results needs to take into account the economic and demographic context of the community in which the assessment was taken.

Considerable variation exists in levels of poverty, English language abilities, and special needs students found among New England states and across Rhode Island districts. Urban districts across the country tend to face the unique challenge of having relatively higher concentrations of these populations. For example, although each district in Rhode Island has students eligible for free or reduced lunch, a frequently used proxy for poverty, over 50 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 71 percent of free/reduced lunch students. This means that the other twenty-six school districts, charter schools and state-run schools combined have about 29 percent of the state's students who are considered "in poverty." This concentration of poverty within the state's urban core areas is one factor that contributes to the lower performance of schools in those districts.

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 (RIDE). The most recent year for which all nationally comparable data are available from NCES is school year 2013-14 while Rhode Island-specific statistics use data from school year 2013-14.

Indicators in this section include:

- *Poverty* – the percent of families living at or below the poverty level;
- *Adult Educational Attainment* – the grade of school completed and/or the degree received, presented as a percent of the population 25 years or older (does not represent maximum attainment);
- *Free and Reduced Lunch* – a federally-assisted program that provides reduced-price lunches to school children between 131 and 185 percent of the poverty level, and free lunches to students at or below 130 percent of poverty;
- *Limited English Proficiency* – the percent of individuals for whom English is not their primary language and/or have limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English; and
- *Special Education/Individualized 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 discussion compares Rhode Island to the five other New England states, and to the national average, on selected demographic measures. Data used in this section comes from U.S Census Bureau's American Community Survey one-year estimates for 2014 and the National Center for Education Statistics data for the 2013-2014 school year. It should be noted that the data sources used in this section, and the years for which data was available, differ from those used later in this section of the report to compare districts within Rhode Island.

### **Socio-Economic Factors**

#### **Population**

As shown in Table 11, all six of the New England states experienced positive population growth between 2010 and 2014. However, the population growth rate in all six of the states in the region was below the national average of 3.1 percent. Massachusetts had the greatest growth rate in the region during this time period at 2.9 percent, while Vermont had the slowest growth rate at 0.1 percent. Between 2010 and 2014, Rhode Island's population increased by 0.2 percent, from 1.053 million to 1.055 million people.



## Poverty

One measure of poverty is the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), a federal government statistic based on income thresholds which vary with family size. In 2014, FPL for a family of four was defined as \$23,850 in combined income, while in 2010 it was \$22,050. The percentage of Rhode Island families living below the poverty level in 2014 was 17.9 percent, tied with Maine for the highest percentage in New England. Nationally, however, 18.0 percent of families lived below the poverty level in 2014. Between 2010 and 2014, the percentage of Rhode Island families living below the poverty level increased from 15.2 percent to 17.9 percent. By contrast, the percentage of families doing so nationally increased by 17.9 percent to 18.0 percent. In addition, 14.0 percent of individuals living in Rhode Island in 2010 lived below FPL, compared to 14.3 percent in 2014. This compares to national rates of 15.3 percent and 15.5 percent in 2010 and 2014, respectively.

## Educational Attainment

Academic research has found that parental educational attainment is an important predictor of children's educational outcomes. In 2014, 85.8 percent of Rhode Island adults aged 25 years or older had earned at least a high school diploma, compared to 86.9 percent of adults nationally. Additionally, the percentage of Rhode Island adults with a high school diploma or above was the lowest in New England. Also in 2014, 30.4 percent of Rhode Island adults aged 25 years or older had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 30.1 percent nationally. However, this was the second-lowest percentage among the six New England states, ahead of Maine. Massachusetts had the greatest percentage of adults aged 25 years or older having earned a bachelor's degree or higher, with 41.2 percent having done so.

**Table 11**  
**Selected Socio-Economic Factors 2010 and 2014**  
**New England and United States Average**

State	Total Population (thousands)			Below Poverty Level				Adult Educational Attainment***			
	2010	2014	Change	Individuals		Families**		High School+		Bachelor+	
				2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014
U.S. Average*	309,350	318,857	3.1%	15.3%	15.5%	17.9%	18.0%	85.6%	86.9%	28.2%	30.1%
Connecticut	3,577	3,597	0.5%	10.1%	10.8%	11.4%	12.4%	88.6%	90.1%	35.5%	38.0%
Maine	1,328	1,330	0.2%	12.9%	14.1%	15.2%	17.9%	90.3%	91.7%	26.8%	29.4%
Massachusetts	6,557	6,745	2.9%	11.4%	11.6%	12.8%	13.2%	89.1%	89.7%	39.0%	41.2%
New Hampshire	1,317	1,327	0.8%	8.3%	9.2%	9.2%	11.0%	91.5%	92.2%	32.8%	35.0%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>83.5%</b>	<b>85.8%</b>	<b>30.2%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>
Vermont	626	627	0.1%	12.7%	12.2%	13.8%	14.2%	91.0%	92.0%	33.6%	34.9%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia.

\*\*Families with related children under 18 years old.

\*\*\*For the population 25 and older; high school attainment includes degree or equivalent; does not represent maximum attainment.

Note: Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of four in 2010 was \$22,050; in 2014, it was \$23,850. For individuals, FPL was \$10,830 in 2010 and \$11,670 in 2014.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey; RIPEC calculations

## Enrollment

According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Rhode Island experienced a 2.3 percent decline in pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade public school enrollment (including charters and ungraded students) between the 2008-09 and 2013-14 school years. Nationally, pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment increased by 1.6 percent during this same time period. In New England, no state experienced an increase in enrollment; New Hampshire and Vermont each experienced a decrease in PK-12 enrollment of greater than 5.0 percent.

### English Language Learners

Nationally, the number of students classified as English Language Learners (ELL), also known as Limited English Proficiency (LEP), increased from 8.0 percent in the 2008-09 school year to 8.9 percent in the 2013-14 school year. In Rhode Island, the 2013-2014 percentage of ELL was 6.6 percent, which was 2.3 percentage points below the national average. Although Rhode Island had the second-highest percentage of ELL students among the six New England states in 2013-2014, Massachusetts had the highest percentage of ELL students at 7.4 percent. All of the New England states remained below the national average for the percentage of ELL students enrolled during the 2013-2014 school year.

State	Public School Fall Enrollment			English Language Learners*		Special Education**		Free/Reduced Lunch***	
	2008-09	2013-14	Change	2008-09	2013-14	2008-09	2013-14	2008-09	2013-14
United States	49,265,572	50,044,522	1.6%	8.0%	8.9%	12.5%	12.8%	42.6%	49.9%
Connecticut	567,198	546,200	-3.7%	5.2%	5.7%	12.2%	13.0%	29.9%	37.1%
Maine	192,935	183,995	-4.6%	N/D	2.8%	15.9%	16.1%	37.0%	44.0%
Massachusetts	958,910	955,739	-0.3%	5.1%	7.4%	17.6%	17.5%	30.7%	38.2%
New Hampshire	197,934	186,310	-5.9%	1.8%	1.9%	15.2%	15.5%	20.5%	27.7%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>145,342</b>	<b>142,008</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>	<b>N/D</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>39.3%</b>	<b>46.2%</b>
Vermont	93,625	88,690	-5.3%	1.6%	1.5%	N/D	15.7%	29.0%	37.9%

\*Students served in a language assistance program.  
 \*\*Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).  
 \*\*\*Students with family incomes less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Level

NOTE: N/D indicates that data was not available for that year; U.S. 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; RIPEC calculations

### Individualized Education Plan/Special Education

During the 2013-2014 school year, 16.4 percent of Rhode Island public school students were enrolled in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This percentage was greater than the national average of 12.8 percent of public school students and was the second-highest percentage in New England, trailing Massachusetts (17.5 percent). However, it should be noted that while the percentage of students enrolled in an IEP increased nationally between the 2008-2009 and 2013-2014 school years, it declined in Rhode Island from 19.0 percent to 16.4 percent.

### Free/Reduced Lunch

A commonly-used proxy for poverty is the percentage of students enrolled in the free/reduced lunch (FRL) program. Children living in families with incomes between 130.0 and 185.0 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) are eligible for reduced-price lunch, while families with incomes of less than 130 percent of FPL are eligible for free lunches. Between the 2008-2009 and 2013-2014 school years, the percentage of students enrolled nationally in the FRL program increased by 7.3 percentage points from 42.6 percent to 49.9 percent. During the same time period, the percentage of FRL students in Rhode Island increased by 6.9 percentage points from 39.3 percent to 46.2 percent. The percentage of Rhode Island students enrolled in the FRL program was the greatest among the six New England states during the 2013-2014 school year.

### **Rhode Island Demographics**

This section examines Rhode Island-specific trends and demographics, including total student enrollment, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and free/reduced lunch enrollments. Data used in this section is provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Total enrollment figures, as well as the number of students enrolled in Limited English Proficiency, Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and free or reduced lunch programs, are based on fall enrollment data. Data is provided on a statewide basis, as well as for each public school district, and aggregated totals for charter and state-run schools.

### **Enrollment**

Between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years, public school enrollment in Rhode Island decreased from 145,118 students to 141,959 students, a 2.2 percent decline, or 3,159 students. While the majority of public school districts experienced a decline in enrollments during this time period, not all districts saw a decline, most notably North Providence, where enrollments increased by 8.2 percent. Overall, student enrollment in public school districts declined by 6,449 students, or 4.6 percent, between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years. By contrast, enrollment in charter schools increased from 2,467 students to 5,584 students, or 126.3 percent, during the same time period. Similarly, enrollment in state-run schools increased by 173 students, or 10.6 percent, between the same two years.

RIPEC classifies each public school district into one of four regions (Urban Core, Urban Ring, Suburban, Emerging Suburban) based on geography and other factors. Among these four regions, the communities comprising the Emerging Suburban region experienced the largest percentage decline in student enrollment (8.8 percent) between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years. Similarly, the Suburban region experienced the largest absolute decline (2,304 students) in student enrollment during the same time period. Student enrollment also declined in Urban Ring communities (5.6 percent) and Urban Core communities (0.1 percent).

### Limited English Proficiency

According to data provided by RIDE, there were 6,832 students participating in Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs statewide during the 2009-2010 school year, equivalent to 4.7

percent of the total student population. During the 2014-2015 school year, that number increased to 9,643, or 6.8 percent of the student population, despite the decrease in total enrollment during this time. This represents a statewide increase of 41.1 percent over the five-year time period.

The majority of LEP students are concentrated in the state's Urban Core and Urban Ring districts; during the 2014-2015 school year, 75.8 percent of all LEP enrollments were in the five Urban Core districts, with an additional 10.0 percent in the Urban Ring districts. Furthermore, more than half of all LEP students were enrolled in the Providence school district alone. LEP enrollments in Urban Core districts increased by 2,192 students, or 42.8 percent, between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years. Notably, LEP enrollments in charter schools increased from 266 students to 668 students, or 151.1 percent, during the same time period.

### Individualized Education Plans

During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 21,308 students enrolled in Individualized Education Plans (IEP) statewide. This represented a decline of 2,327 students, or 9.8 percent, from the 23,635 students that were enrolled in an IEP statewide during the 2009-2010 school year. As a percentage of total student enrollments statewide, 15.0 percent of students were enrolled in an IEP during the 2014-2015 school year, compared to 16.3 percent during the 2009-2010 school year. These data are in line with NCES statewide data provided in the previous section of this report.

Among the four regions of the state, Urban Core school districts had the greatest percentage of students enrolled in an IEP (16.5 percent) during the 2014-2015 school year. Emerging Suburban school districts had the least percentage of students enrolled in an IEP (13.1 percent). Student enrollments in an IEP declined as a percentage of total student enrollment in all four of the state's regions between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years. Notably, however, IEP enrollments at charter schools increased from 316 students during the 2009-2010 school year to 747 students during the 2014-2015 school year, an increase of 136.4 percent.

**Table 13**  
**Total Enrollment, Limited English Proficiency, Special Education and Free/Reduced Lunch by RI Public School District**

School District	Total Enrollment				Limited English Proficiency				Individualized Education Program				Free/Reduced Lunch			
	2009-10		2014-15		2009-10		2014-15		2009-10		2014-15		2009-10		2014-15	
	Amount	Amount	Change Amount	Change Percent	Amount	Amount	Change Amount	Change Percent	Amount	Amount	Change Amount	Change Percent	Amount	Amount	Change Amount	Change Percent
<i>Urban Core</i>																
Central Falls	2,862	2,683	-179	-6.3%	611	636	25	4.1%	588	552	-36	-6.1%	2,181	2,124	-57	-2.6%
Newport	2,106	2,072	-34	-1.6%	54	94	40	74.1%	405	374	-31	-7.7%	1,205	1,292	87	7.2%
Pawtucket	8,838	9,057	219	2.5%	912	867	-45	-4.9%	1,363	1,303	-60	-4.4%	6,633	6,599	-34	-0.5%
Providence	23,847	23,907	60	0.3%	3,182	5,211	2,029	63.8%	4,418	3,719	-699	-15.8%	20,206	19,229	-977	-4.8%
Woonsocket	6,086	5,995	-91	-1.5%	362	505	143	39.5%	1,335	1,269	-66	-4.9%	4,130	4,287	157	3.8%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>43,739</b>	<b>43,714</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>5,121</b>	<b>7,313</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>8,109</b>	<b>7,217</b>	<b>-892</b>	<b>-11.0%</b>	<b>34,355</b>	<b>33,531</b>	<b>-824</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>
<i>Urban Ring</i>																
Cranston	10,774	10,457	-317	-2.9%	517	536	19	3.7%	1,669	1,359	-310	-18.6%	3,443	4,436	993	28.8%
East Providence	5,740	5,280	-460	-8.0%	219	173	-46	-21.0%	1,483	874	-609	-41.1%	2,375	2,641	266	11.2%
North Providence	3,289	3,560	271	8.2%	71	91	20	28.2%	504	636	132	26.2%	879	1,756	877	99.8%
Warwick	10,507	9,277	-1,230	-11.7%	64	97	33	51.6%	2,023	1,562	-461	-22.8%	3,047	3,187	140	4.6%
West Warwick	3,594	3,417	-177	-4.9%	55	68	13	23.6%	713	536	-177	-24.8%	1,622	1,689	67	4.1%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>33,904</b>	<b>31,991</b>	<b>-1,913</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>6,392</b>	<b>4,967</b>	<b>-1,425</b>	<b>-22.3%</b>	<b>11,366</b>	<b>13,709</b>	<b>2,343</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
<i>Suburban</i>																
Barrington	3,434	3,288	-146	-4.3%	28	38	10	35.7%	412	397	-15	-3.6%	139	145	6	4.3%
Bristol-Warren	3,537	3,358	-179	-5.1%	89	80	-9	-10.1%	424	379	-45	-10.6%	1,109	1,216	107	9.6%
Cumberland	5,025	4,543	-482	-9.6%	0	94	94	N/A	5	702	697	13940.0%	1,010	1,139	129	12.8%
East Greenwich	2,393	2,412	19	0.8%	19	8	-11	-57.9%	354	270	-84	-23.7%	162	155	-7	-4.3%
Johnston	3,200	3,116	-84	-2.6%	57	113	56	98.2%	818	624	-194	-23.7%	1,177	1,144	-33	-2.8%
Lincoln	3,355	3,084	-271	-8.1%	34	23	-11	-32.4%	520	460	-60	-11.5%	753	845	92	12.2%
Middletown	2,361	2,285	-76	-3.2%	68	86	18	26.5%	436	367	-69	-15.8%	614	645	31	5.0%
Narragansett	1,467	1,340	-127	-8.7%	0	4	4	100.0%	227	247	20	8.8%	205	280	75	36.6%
North Kingstown	4,456	4,088	-368	-8.3%	48	55	7	14.6%	597	483	-114	-19.1%	797	894	97	12.2%
Portsmouth	2,859	2,563	-296	-10.4%	3	0	-3	-100.0%	472	373	-99	-21.0%	313	388	75	24.0%
Smithfield	2,508	2,372	-136	-5.4%	6	13	7	116.7%	250	253	3	1.2%	340	388	48	14.1%
Westerly	3,193	3,022	-171	-5.4%	84	53	-31	-36.9%	566	479	-87	-15.4%	974	1,199	225	23.1%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>38,275</b>	<b>35,971</b>	<b>-2,304</b>	<b>-6.0%</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>5,168</b>	<b>5,091</b>	<b>-77</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>	<b>7,617</b>	<b>8,499</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>																
Burrillville	2,513	2,408	-105	-4.2%	4	5	1	25.0%	332	368	36	10.8%	727	872	145	19.9%
Chariho	3,574	3,305	-269	-7.5%	14	8	-6	-42.9%	373	372	-1	-0.3%	704	692	-12	-1.7%
Covenry	5,401	4,854	-547	-10.1%	8	11	3	37.5%	798	686	-112	-14.0%	1,210	1,644	434	35.9%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,906	1,645	-261	-13.7%	17	14	-3	-17.6%	273	205	-68	-24.9%	244	238	-6	-2.5%
Foster	257	284	27	10.5%	0	0	0	N/A	17	33	16	94.1%	16	66	50	312.5%
Foster-Glocester	1,383	1,121	-262	-18.9%	0	0	0	N/A	68	108	40	58.8%	196	208	12	6.1%
Glocester	596	529	-67	-11.2%	0	0	0	N/A	82	55	-27	-32.9%	108	85	-23	-21.3%
Little Compton	317	248	-69	-21.8%	0	0	0	N/A	37	27	-10	-27.0%	11	33	22	200.0%
New Shoreham	126	118	-8	-6.3%	1	9	8	800.0%	14	24	10	71.4%	15	20	5	33.3%
North Smithfield	1,829	1,775	-54	-3.0%	15	12	-3	-20.0%	293	250	-43	-14.7%	241	302	61	25.3%
Scituate	1,656	1,419	-237	-14.3%	0	0	0	N/A	118	141	23	19.5%	198	278	80	40.4%
South Kingstown	3,581	3,321	-260	-7.3%	15	24	9	60.0%	570	406	-164	-28.8%	563	642	79	14.0%
Tiverton	1,966	1,871	-95	-4.8%	0	10	10	1000.0%	364	317	-47	-12.9%	413	538	125	30.3%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>25,105</b>	<b>22,898</b>	<b>-2,207</b>	<b>-8.8%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>3,339</b>	<b>2,992</b>	<b>-347</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>	<b>4,646</b>	<b>5,618</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>20.9%</b>
Charter Schools	2,467	5,584	3,117	126.3%	266	668	402	151.1%	316	747	431	136.4%	1,548	3,649	2,101	135.7%
State-Run Schools*	1,628	1,801	173	10.6%	7	34	27	385.7%	311	294	-17	-5.5%	1,026	1,150	124	12.1%
<b>Rhode Island Total</b>	<b>145,118</b>	<b>141,959</b>	<b>-3,159</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>	<b>6,832</b>	<b>9,643</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>23,635</b>	<b>21,308</b>	<b>-2,327</b>	<b>-9.8%</b>	<b>60,558</b>	<b>66,156</b>	<b>5,598</b>	<b>9.2%</b>

\*Includes Davies, DCYF, the MET and School for the Deaf  
 SOURCE: R.I. Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

### Free/Reduced Lunch

Statewide student enrollments in the Free /Reduced Lunch (FRL) program increased by 5,598 students, or 9.2 percent, between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years. Statewide, 46.6 percent of Rhode Island public school students participated in the FRL program during the 2014-2015 school year. Although the percentage of students in the FRL program declined by 2.4 percent in Urban Core school districts between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years, 76.7 percent of students enrolled in these districts participated in the FRL program during the 2014-2015 school year. Among Suburban school districts, 11.6 percent of all students participated in the FRL program during the 2014-2015 school year. Providence (80.4 percent) had the greatest percentage of students participate in the FRL program during the 2014-2015 school year.

## V. School Revenues

### Highlights

- According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Rhode Island relies more heavily upon local revenue sources to support public education than the nation as a whole. During FY 2013 (2012-2013 school year), 52.4 percent of public education revenues in the state came from local sources, compared to 38.9 percent from state sources and 8.7 percent from federal sources. Nationally, during the same fiscal year, 45.5 percent of public education revenues came from local sources, 45.2 percent came from state sources and 9.3 percent came from federal sources.
- Among Rhode Island's school districts, the urban core as a whole, which includes the districts of Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket, relies more heavily on state and federal revenue sources to support public education than the rest of the state. Rhode Island Department of Education data for FY 2014 (2013-2014 school year) indicates that these districts received 29.4 percent of public education revenues from local sources, 55.7 percent from state sources and 14.9 percent from federal sources. Statewide, including charter schools and state-run schools, 56.5 percent of public education revenues came from local sources, 35.1 percent came from state sources and 8.4 percent came from federal sources.
- Per pupil state aid for public education increased by 30.0 percent between FY 2005 (2004-2005 school year) and FY 2015 (2014-2015 school year), from \$4,177 per pupil to \$5,428 per pupil). The state's urban ring districts of Cranston, East Providence, North Providence, Warwick and West Warwick experienced the largest percentage increase in per pupil state aid during this time period (36.3 percent).

### Overview

Funding for public education is derived from three primary sources: local (primarily the property tax), state and federal sources. The extent to which each state or community relies on each source of funding is linked to their specific socio-economic and demographic characteristics. For example, federal education funding provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, is directed primarily to communities with large percentages of low-income students. Education aid from the state and/or federal governments is generally intended to assist poorer communities with a limited ability to generate financial resources at the local level. This is evident in Rhode Island, where urban communities with lower levels of wealth receive a greater percentage of education revenues from the state and federal governments than suburban communities with greater levels of wealth.

In 2010, the Rhode Island General Assembly adopted a statewide education funding formula intended to provide a base amount of state aid for each student, while providing additional resources to communities with high levels of poverty (as measured by student eligibility for the federal free or reduced lunch program) and an inability to generate revenue at the local level. The funding formula follows the principle that the "money follows the student," whereby funds

follow a student that changes school districts or enrolls at a charter or career and technical school. Additional categorical funding is provided for high-cost programs, such as career and technical education, high cost special education and other programs. In recent years, there has been debate over the impact of the “money follows the student” principle on traditional public school districts as increasing numbers of students enroll in charter schools.

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 2002-2003 (FY 2003) and 2012-2013 (FY 2013) school years and was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics. Rhode Island-specific data, including fall enrollment and source and revenue totals, is from the Rhode Island Department of Education and the most recent year available was the 2003-2014 (FY 2014) school year. District-level state aid was calculated using data from the House Fiscal Advisory Staff for the 2004-2005 (FY 2005) and 2014-2015 (FY 2015) school years.

### **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, during the 2012-2013 school year (FY 2013), local resources supported 45.5 percent of education funding, while state resources supported 45.2 percent and federal resources supported 9.3 percent. Since FY 2003, local and federal resources have increased as a share of national education revenues, while state resources have declined.

	2002-2003 (FY 2003)						2012-2013 (FY 2013)					
	Local		State		Federal		Local		State		Federal	
	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank
U.S. Average*	42.8%	--	48.7%	--	8.5%	--	45.5%	--	45.2%	--	9.3%	--
Connecticut	57.4%	3	37.4%	43	5.2%	48	56.2%	7	39.5%	39	4.4%	49
Maine	48.1%	16	42.9%	37	8.9%	25	52.5%	13	39.9%	38	7.6%	40
Massachusetts	53.1%	9	40.9%	39	6.0%	46	54.9%	8	39.4%	40	5.7%	47
New Hampshire	45.9%	21	48.9%	25	5.2%	49	58.8%	2	35.5%	45	5.7%	46
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>51.5%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>42.0%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>31</b>
Vermont	25.3%	47	67.8%	4	7.0%	39	4.0%	49	88.9%	1	7.1%	42

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia; ranks exclude District of Columbia  
 Note: Values may not equal 100% due to rounding  
 Source: National Center for Education Statistics; RIPEC Calculations

The New England states, with the exception of Vermont, generally rely more on local resources to support education than does the rest of the country. One should note that Vermont’s small local contribution to education funding is the result of legal and legislative action that redesigned

that state’s system of education finance (see *Brigham v. State of Vermont* and Vermont Act 60 for more information). Aside from Vermont, local revenues represented a higher percentage of total education revenues than the national average in each New England state in both FY 2003 and FY 2013. Additionally, New England states tend to receive less in federal financial support for education than the national average.

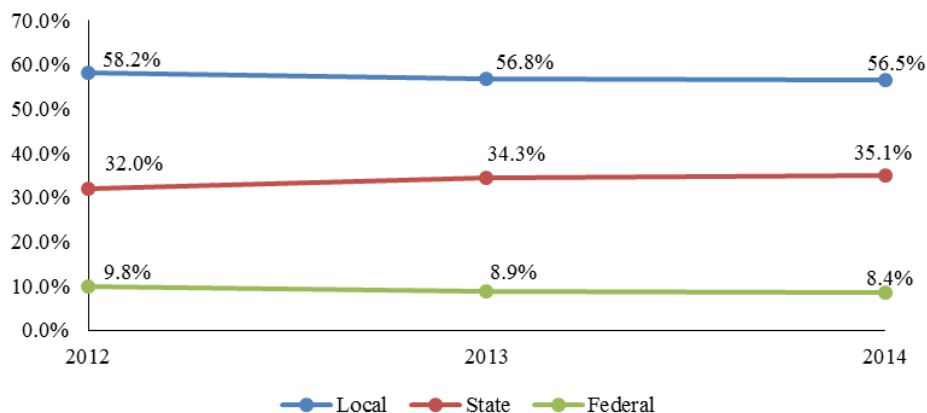
In FY 2013, Rhode Island ranked the 14<sup>th</sup> highest (52.4 percent) for the percentage of education revenues provided by local governments, compared to 11<sup>th</sup> highest nationally in FY 2003 (51.5 percent). The percentage of education revenue provided by the state government declined somewhat over the ten-year period (42.0 percent in FY 2003 to 38.9 percent in FY 2013); Rhode Island also declined in national rankings for the percentage of education revenue provided by state government. Of the New England states, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire had a higher local contribution to education revenues than Rhode Island during FY 2013. Federal funding represented a comparatively small source of education revenues in New England, with all states in the region ranking in the bottom half nationally for the percentage of total education revenues coming from the federal government.

**Rhode Island Revenues – Statewide**

**Revenues by District**

The primary means of education funding for most public school districts is local revenues, which consists primarily of property tax revenue. The second largest category of revenue 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 programs, Title 1 educational funding 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.

**Chart 1  
Education Revenue by Source as % of Total Revenue  
FY 2012 - FY 2014**





As displayed in Chart 1, state aid increased as a percentage of total education revenue in Rhode Island between FY 2012 and FY 2014 from 32.0 percent to 35.1 percent. In contrast, local revenues declined from 58.2 percent of total education revenue to 56.5 percent. Similarly, federal aid declined from 9.8 percent of education revenue to 8.4 percent.

As shown in Table 15, the extent to which a district relies on each of the three funding sources varies across the state. In FY 2014, local revenues ranged from a low of 22.2 percent in Woonsocket to a high of 95.2 percent in New Shoreham. State aid as a percentage of total education revenues was the greatest in Woonsocket, at 62.9 percent. It should be noted that the state-financed Central Falls school district is excluded from this comparison. Across all school districts, 56.5 cents of every dollar raised to support schools came from local sources (property taxes) in FY 2014. Of the remainder, 35.1 cents of every dollar came from state aid, and 8.4 cents came from federal sources.

Local revenues represent the largest portion of education revenues in the state's urban ring, suburban and emerging suburban districts, while state aid represents the largest share of total revenues in the urban core districts. Urban core districts, which include Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket, received 55.7 percent of total education revenues from the state in FY 2014, along with 29.4 percent from local sources and 14.9 percent from federal sources. By contrast, the state's urban ring, suburban and emerging suburban districts each received a majority of education revenues through local sources and received below 10.0 percent of total revenues from federal sources.

**Table 15**  
**FY 2014 Public School Revenues by Source**

School Districts	Source of Funding				Percent of Total		
	Local	State**	Federal	Total	Local	State	Federal
<i>Urban Core</i>							
Central Falls	\$530,275	\$38,725,739	\$8,991,323	\$48,247,337	1.1%	80.3%	18.6%
Newport	24,099,118	10,922,713	4,082,355	39,104,187	61.6%	27.9%	10.4%
Pawtucket	31,040,408	72,266,570	16,537,171	119,844,149	25.9%	60.3%	13.8%
Providence	126,656,444	206,786,094	59,657,987	393,100,525	32.2%	52.6%	15.2%
Woonsocket	17,179,053	48,665,041	11,551,845	77,395,939	22.2%	62.9%	14.9%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$199,505,298	\$377,366,157	\$100,820,681	\$677,692,136	29.4%	55.7%	14.9%
<i>Urban Ring</i>							
Cranston	\$94,451,997	\$43,726,683	\$10,864,982	\$149,043,663	63.4%	29.3%	7.3%
East Providence	45,219,538	28,481,108	6,416,373	80,117,020	56.4%	35.5%	8.0%
North Providence	32,414,926	15,554,469	3,666,203	51,635,598	62.8%	30.1%	7.1%
Warwick	127,143,201	36,209,213	9,241,365	172,593,779	73.7%	21.0%	5.4%
West Warwick	31,414,323	20,314,011	3,760,722	55,489,055	56.6%	36.6%	6.8%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$330,643,986	\$144,285,484	\$33,949,646	\$508,879,116	65.0%	28.4%	6.7%
<i>Suburban</i>							
Barrington	\$42,051,817	\$3,996,308	\$1,597,558	\$47,645,683	88.3%	8.4%	3.4%
Bristol Warren	35,267,420	18,927,159	3,347,649	57,542,228	61.3%	32.9%	5.8%
Cumberland	40,344,532	14,861,709	3,583,442	58,789,684	68.6%	25.3%	6.1%
East Greenwich	32,454,539	2,304,259	1,189,737	35,948,534	90.3%	6.4%	3.3%
Jamestown	11,268,968	421,766	572,260	12,262,994	91.9%	3.4%	4.7%
Johnston	37,730,006	11,978,229	3,211,724	52,919,959	71.3%	22.6%	6.1%
Lincoln	40,343,940	9,086,974	2,915,633	52,346,547	77.1%	17.4%	5.6%
Middletown	25,511,119	9,142,624	2,709,304	37,363,047	68.3%	24.5%	7.3%
Narragansett	25,210,096	2,226,062	1,195,426	28,631,584	88.0%	7.8%	4.2%
North Kingstown	49,200,945	11,379,080	2,811,629	63,391,654	77.6%	18.0%	4.4%
Portsmouth	32,690,577	5,140,310	1,613,966	39,444,853	82.9%	13.0%	4.1%
Smithfield	28,244,397	5,260,803	1,379,686	34,884,887	81.0%	15.1%	4.0%
Westerly	46,283,426	7,347,493	3,298,323	56,929,242	81.3%	12.9%	5.8%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$446,601,781	\$102,072,777	\$29,426,338	\$578,100,896	77.3%	17.7%	5.1%
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>							
Burrillville	\$16,950,159	\$13,161,743	\$2,412,810	\$32,524,713	52.1%	40.5%	7.4%
Chariho*	44,409,805	14,271,193	2,457,332	61,138,329	72.6%	23.3%	4.0%
Coventry	44,683,826	20,808,899	3,855,296	69,348,021	64.4%	30.0%	5.6%
Exeter-West Greenwich	24,241,763	7,308,020	1,272,477	32,822,259	73.9%	22.3%	3.9%
Foster	3,158,492	1,198,412	307,621	4,664,525	67.7%	25.7%	6.6%
Foster-Glocester	15,101,696	8,416,193	808,384	24,326,274	62.1%	34.6%	3.3%
Glocester	6,473,803	2,751,818	560,006	9,785,627	66.2%	28.1%	5.7%
Little Compton	6,337,451	415,388	242,174	6,995,014	90.6%	5.9%	3.5%
New Shoreham	4,534,582	82,215	147,688	4,764,485	95.2%	1.7%	3.1%
North Smithfield	18,644,772	5,431,671	1,132,558	25,209,001	74.0%	21.5%	4.5%
Scituate	18,475,778	3,704,802	1,085,465	23,266,046	79.4%	15.9%	4.7%
South Kingstown	50,487,468	8,507,799	2,392,843	61,388,110	82.2%	13.9%	3.9%
Tiverton	23,313,713	5,928,519	1,467,092	30,709,325	75.9%	19.3%	4.8%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$276,813,309	\$91,986,672	\$18,141,747	\$386,941,728	71.5%	23.8%	4.7%
Charter Schools	\$33,440,500	\$56,774,397	\$8,552,012	\$98,766,909	33.9%	57.5%	8.7%
State-Run Schools & Other***	7,053,755	30,756,133	2,419,607	40,229,495	17.5%	76.5%	6.0%
<b>Rhode Island Total</b>	<b>\$1,294,058,629</b>	<b>\$803,241,619</b>	<b>\$193,310,030</b>	<b>\$2,290,610,279</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>35.1%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>

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

\*\* Includes direct state aid and is exclusive of set-aside funds, including charter school aid, the state contribution to teacher retirement, and construction aid

\*\*\*Includes Davies, The MET, School for the Deaf and UCAP

SOURCE: RI. Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

### State Education Aid

State support for education includes aid directly distributed to individual public school districts through the education funding formula (including state funding for the Central Falls school district) and through categorical aid for purposes such as professional development, special education, career and technical education and transportation. State aid, as discussed in this section of the report, considers only direct aid to municipalities and does not include categorical aid or direct aid to charter or state-run schools. State aid also is exclusive of the state share of teacher retirement and construction aid.

Direct state aid to all public school districts in Rhode Island increased by \$89.0 million (13.9 percent) from \$641.5 million to \$730.5 million between FY 2005 and FY 2015. The largest increase in aid occurred in the state's urban ring districts of Cranston, East Providence, North Providence, Warwick and West Warwick, where state aid increased by 20.0 percent. On a per pupil basis, state aid increased statewide by 30.0 percent from \$4,177 per student to \$5,428 per student. The difference in percentage change between nominal state aid and per pupil state aid can be attributed to a decline in public school enrollment between FY 2005 and FY 2015.

In general, urban communities tended to receive a greater amount of state aid on a per pupil basis than suburban or emerging suburban communities. The five urban core communities averaged \$8,930 in per pupil state aid in FY 2015, while the five urban ring communities averaged \$4,692 in per pupil state aid. By contrast, suburban school districts averaged \$2,848 in per pupil state aid and emerging suburban districts averaged \$3,823 in per pupil state aid during the same year.

As a percentage of total state aid, 53.4 percent of aid was provided to urban core districts, 20.6 percent was provided to urban ring districts, 14.0 percent was provided to suburban districts and 12.0 percent was provided to emerging suburban districts during FY 2015. These figures are comparable to FY 2005, when 52.3 percent of aid was provided to urban core districts, 20.6 percent was provided to urban ring districts, 14.0 percent was provided to suburban districts and 12.0 percent was provided to emerging suburban districts.

**Table 16**  
**Direct State Education Aid By District**  
**FY 2005 - 2015**

School Districts	State Aid				Per Pupil State Aid			
	FY 2005	FY 2015	Change	% Change	FY 2005	FY 2015	Change	% Change
<i>Urban Core</i>								
Central Falls	\$37,881,365	\$39,085,004	\$1,203,639	3.2%	\$10,361	\$14,568	\$4,206	40.6%
Newport	\$11,060,746	\$10,623,202	-\$437,544	-4.0%	\$4,241	\$5,127	\$886	20.9%
Pawtucket	\$61,615,711	\$74,842,935	\$13,227,224	21.5%	\$6,502	\$8,264	\$1,761	27.1%
Providence	\$181,224,594	\$215,122,639	\$33,898,045	18.7%	\$6,777	\$8,998	\$2,221	32.8%
Woonsocket	\$43,913,617	\$50,690,278	\$6,776,661	15.4%	\$6,438	\$8,455	\$2,017	31.3%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$335,696,033	\$390,364,058	\$54,668,025	16.3%	\$6,809	\$8,930	\$2,121	31.1%
<i>Urban Ring</i>								
Cranston	\$33,029,207	\$47,040,378	\$14,011,171	42.4%	\$2,976	\$4,498	\$1,523	51.2%
East Providence	\$25,064,677	\$29,373,000	\$4,308,323	17.2%	\$4,144	\$5,563	\$1,419	34.2%
North Providence	\$12,511,050	\$16,607,860	\$4,096,810	32.7%	\$3,541	\$4,665	\$1,124	31.7%
Warwick	\$35,195,464	\$36,064,777	\$869,313	2.5%	\$2,960	\$3,888	\$928	31.4%
West Warwick	\$19,341,994	\$21,027,603	\$1,685,609	8.7%	\$5,103	\$6,154	\$1,050	20.6%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$125,142,392	\$150,113,618	\$24,971,226	20.0%	\$3,442	\$4,692	\$1,251	36.3%
<i>Suburban</i>								
Barrington	\$2,398,582	\$4,701,418	\$2,302,836	96.0%	\$702	\$1,430	\$728	103.6%
Bristol-Warren	\$19,267,184	\$16,749,945	-\$2,517,239	-13.1%	\$5,314	\$4,988	-\$326	-6.1%
Cumberland	\$12,594,809	\$15,756,436	\$3,161,627	25.1%	\$2,377	\$3,468	\$1,091	45.9%
East Greenwich	\$1,810,042	\$2,469,555	\$659,513	36.4%	\$734	\$1,024	\$290	39.4%
Jamestown	\$492,652	\$406,834	-\$85,818	-17.4%	\$942	\$814	-\$128	-13.6%
Johnston	\$10,188,342	\$13,192,809	\$3,004,467	29.5%	\$3,118	\$4,234	\$1,116	35.8%
Lincoln	\$7,012,603	\$9,855,862	\$2,843,259	40.5%	\$1,962	\$3,196	\$1,234	62.9%
Middletown	\$9,916,122	\$8,905,309	-\$1,010,813	-10.2%	\$3,864	\$3,897	\$33	0.9%
Narragansett	\$1,725,404	\$1,993,920	\$268,516	15.6%	\$1,053	\$1,488	\$435	41.3%
North Kingstown	\$11,384,463	\$10,725,467	-\$658,996	-5.8%	\$2,415	\$2,624	\$209	8.6%
Portsmouth	\$5,854,978	\$4,882,427	-\$972,551	-16.6%	\$1,913	\$1,905	-\$8	-0.4%
Smithfield	\$5,332,948	\$5,115,212	-\$217,736	-4.1%	\$1,998	\$2,156	\$158	7.9%
Westerly	\$6,386,546	\$7,704,193	\$1,317,647	20.6%	\$1,763	\$2,549	\$787	44.6%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$94,364,675	\$102,459,387	\$8,094,712	8.6%	\$2,333	\$2,848	\$515	22.1%
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>								
Burrillville	\$13,076,186	\$13,173,610	\$97,424	0.7%	\$5,154	\$5,471	\$317	6.1%
Chariho	\$13,954,554	\$13,806,896	-\$147,658	-1.1%	\$3,597	\$4,178	\$581	16.2%
Coventry	\$18,881,202	\$21,039,824	\$2,158,622	11.4%	\$3,275	\$4,335	\$1,060	32.4%
Exeter-West Greenwich	\$7,227,202	\$6,637,627	-\$589,575	-8.2%	\$3,344	\$4,035	\$691	20.7%
Foster	\$1,311,926	\$1,193,192	-\$118,734	-9.1%	\$3,952	\$4,201	\$250	6.3%
Foster-Glocester	\$5,395,937	\$5,204,461	-\$191,476	-3.5%	\$3,206	\$4,643	\$1,437	44.8%
Glocester	\$2,995,087	\$2,640,483	-\$354,604	-11.8%	\$3,941	\$4,991	\$1,051	26.7%
Little Compton	\$341,592	\$401,928	\$60,336	17.7%	\$1,045	\$1,621	\$576	55.1%
New Shoreham	\$93,128	\$91,103	-\$2,025	-2.2%	\$665	\$772	\$107	16.1%
North Smithfield	\$4,541,694	\$5,587,845	\$1,046,151	23.0%	\$2,474	\$3,148	\$674	27.3%
Scituate	\$3,200,400	\$3,960,437	\$760,037	23.7%	\$1,760	\$2,791	\$1,031	58.5%
South Kingstown	\$9,766,904	\$7,977,157	-\$1,789,747	-18.3%	\$2,399	\$2,402	\$3	0.1%
Tiverton	\$5,553,102	\$5,828,165	\$275,063	5.0%	\$2,551	\$3,115	\$564	22.1%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$86,338,914	\$87,542,728	\$1,203,814	1.4%	\$3,141	\$3,823	\$682	21.7%
<b>Rhode Island Total</b>	<b>\$641,542,014</b>	<b>\$730,479,791</b>	<b>\$88,937,777</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>\$4,177</b>	<b>\$5,428</b>	<b>\$1,251</b>	<b>30.0%</b>

Note: State aid excludes charter schools, state-run schools, teacher retirement, and construction aid. FY 2005 corresponds with the 2004-2005 school year, FY 2015 corresponds with the 2014-2015 school year.

SOURCE: House Fiscal Advisory Staff; RI Department of Education; RIPEC calculations

## **VI. School Expenditures**

### **Highlights**

- According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Rhode Island ranked ninth-highest in the country in per pupil current education expenditures during FY 2013 (2012-2013 school year), with spending of \$14,889 per pupil. This figure was 38.3 percent greater than the national average of \$10,763 per pupil. In FY 2003 (2002-2003 school year), Rhode Island's expenditures of \$10,349 per pupil ranked seventh-highest in the nation and were 28.7 percent greater than the national average.
- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) expenditure data indicates that the state spent \$15,903 per pupil in FY 2014 (2013-2014 school year). This represents an increase of \$925, or 6.2 percent, from FY 2010 (2009-2010 school year). Statewide, special education expenditures increased by \$329 per pupil, or 9.8 percent, between FY 2010 and FY 2014, and now account for 23.2 percent of total education expenditures.
- Expenditures for the core disciplines of English language arts, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, foreign languages and general education accounted for 41.0 percent of total per pupil expenditures in FY 2014. This represents an increase of \$325, or 5.3 percent, from FY 2010 spending levels on these subjects.

### **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 one of the most significant investments of financial 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 2016 enacted state budget, total state education aid across all levels is \$1.3 billion, which translates to 35.7 percent of the total general revenue expenditure budget.

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 data with regard to how these resources are being used. This section compares Rhode Island's education expenditures, using several measures, to those throughout New England. It also compares education expenditures across Rhode Island at a district level in order to provide an overview of how much the state is spending on public elementary and secondary education, and where those resources are being committed.

When comparing education expenditures it is important to keep in mind that different districts have different costs due to their individual demographic, economic and geographic characteristics. Districts with higher concentrations of special education or limited English proficiency students will likely 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 basis for comparisons between states;
- *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;
- *Estimated Average Teacher Salaries* – derived from the National Education Association's "Rankings and Estimates of the States," this measure begins to provide a picture of how states use resources; 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 to the national average. Data comes from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Common Core Data Set for the 2002-2003 (FY 2003) and 2012-2013 (FY 2013) school years, and from the National Education Association's "Rankings of the States" 2004 and 2014.

### **Expenditures per Pupil**

One of the most common measures used to compare education spending is per pupil expenditures. The main benefit to using per pupil expenditures is that they account for the vast differences in population across the country. Total enrollment includes all students reported by each school 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 services.

During the 2012-2013 school year, the most recent year for which data is available, Rhode Island's expenditures of \$14,889 per pupil were ranked ninth-highest in the nation and were 38.3 percent greater than the national average of \$10,763 per pupil. Among the New England states, Rhode Island's per pupil expenditures were fourth-highest, behind Connecticut (\$17,321), Vermont (17,286) and Massachusetts (\$15,321). Between the 2002-2003 and 2012-2013 school years, Rhode Island's expenditures increased by \$4,540 (43.9 percent) per pupil, compared to an increase of \$2,719 (33.8 percent) per pupil nationally. Among the New England states, this percentage increase was the fifth-greatest, trailing Vermont (65.4 percent), New Hampshire (63.8 percent), Connecticut (56.7 percent) and Massachusetts (46.5 percent).

**Table 17**  
**Total Current Education Expenditures per Pupil by State**

State	2002-2003			2012-2013			Change	
	Amount	% of US	Rank	Amount	% of US	Rank	Amount	Percent
U.S. Average*	\$8,044	--	--	\$10,763	--	--	\$2,719	33.8%
Connecticut	\$11,057	137.5%	4	\$17,321	160.9%	5	\$6,264	56.7%
Maine	9,344	116.2%	10	12,655	117.6%	14	3,311	35.4%
Massachusetts	10,460	130.0%	5	15,321	142.4%	8	4,861	46.5%
New Hampshire	8,579	106.6%	17	14,050	130.5%	11	5,471	63.8%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>10,349</b>	<b>128.7%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14,889</b>	<b>138.3%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4,540</b>	<b>43.9%</b>
Vermont	10,454	130.0%	6	17,286	160.6%	6	6,832	65.4%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia

Note: Figures exclude expenditures for equipment, non-public schools, school construction, debt financing and community services; ranks include D.C.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics; RIPEC Calculations

### 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, as outlined in Table 18. This provides a measure of the relative affordability of education in each state, using personal income as a benchmark. Using this measure, Rhode Island ranks eighth-highest in the country, with education expenditures of \$43.66 per \$1,000 of personal income. Between the 2002-2003 and 2012-2013 school years, Rhode Island's education expenditures have decreased by \$2.61 per \$1,000 of personal income, the second-greatest rate of decrease in New England. Over the same time period, national education expenditures declined by \$3.55 per \$1,000 of personal income, a decline of 8.5 percent.

**Table 18**  
**Total Current Education Expenditures per \$1,000 of Personal Income by State**

	2002-2003			2012-2013			Change	
	Amount	% of US	Rank	Amount	% of US	Rank	Amount	Percent
U.S. Average*	\$41.76	--	--	\$38.21	--	--	-\$3.55	-8.5%
Connecticut	\$41.73	99.9%	25	\$42.38	110.9%	13	\$0.65	1.6%
Maine	49.60	118.8%	5	44.70	117.0%	7	-4.91	-9.9%
Massachusetts	40.01	95.8%	31	38.55	100.9%	27	-1.45	-3.6%
New Hampshire	39.20	93.9%	37	39.64	103.7%	24	0.43	1.1%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>46.27</b>	<b>110.8%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>43.66</b>	<b>114.3%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-2.61</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>
Vermont	54.63	130.8%	2	55.47	145.2%	2	0.85	1.5%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia

Note: Figures exclude expenditures for equipment, non-public schools, school construction, debt financing and community services.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics; Bureau of Economic Analysis; RIPEC Calculations

## Expenditures by Category

Given the labor-intensive aspects of education, one of the most significant components of education costs is teacher compensation. Table 19 outlines average teacher salaries for the six New England states and the United States. During the 2013-2014 school year, Rhode Island's average teacher salary of \$64,696 was 14.3 percent above the national average of \$56,610, and was the seventh-highest average teacher salary in the country. While the state spent above the national average, Rhode Island's expenditures on teacher salaries were lower than its two immediate neighbors. Massachusetts had the second-highest average teacher salary in the nation (\$73,195) and Connecticut had the fourth-highest average teacher salary in the country (\$70,583).

Between the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years, Rhode Island's average teacher salary increased by 23.8 percent from \$52,261 to \$64,696. This rate of increase was similar to the 21.2 percent increase observed nationally. Among the New England states, Rhode Island's rate of increase was fourth-highest, trailing Massachusetts (36.2 percent), New Hampshire (33.7 percent) and Vermont (33.2 percent), but ahead of Maine (23.5 percent) and Connecticut (23.1 percent).

**Table 19**  
**Average Salaries of Public School Teachers**

State	2003-2004			2013-2014			Change	
	Amount	% of US	Rank	Amount	% of US	Rank	Amount	Percent
U.S. Average*	\$46,704	--	--	\$56,610	--	--	\$9,906	21.2%
Connecticut	\$57,337	122.8%	1	\$70,583	124.7%	4	\$13,246	23.1%
Maine	39,864	85.4%	34	49,232	87.0%	32	9,368	23.5%
Massachusetts	53,733	115.1%	7	73,195	129.3%	2	19,462	36.2%
New Hampshire	42,689	91.4%	23	57,057	100.8%	14	14,368	33.7%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>52,261</b>	<b>111.9%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64,696</b>	<b>114.3%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12,435</b>	<b>23.8%</b>
Vermont	42,007	89.9%	25	55,958	98.8%	17	13,951	33.2%

\*U.S. average includes District of Columbia  
Source: National Education Association; RIPEC Calculations

## Rhode Island Expenditures – Statewide

This section of the report compares expenditures in public school districts across Rhode Island. Districts are grouped into the following categories: urban core, urban ring, suburban and emerging suburban. All expenditure and enrollment data used in this section were provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) system. Teacher salary data was provided courtesy of the Rhode Island Association of School Committees. It should be noted that charter schools and state-run schools are excluded from the analysis in this section. When interpreting per pupil expenditures, it should be remembered that these figures are closely linked to student enrollment. For instance, a school district might hold



total expenditure levels constant from one year to the next, but this would represent a decline in per pupil spending if student enrollment increased during the same time period.

## **District Expenditures**

### Total Education Expenditures

Between FY 2010 (2009-2010 school year) and FY 2014 (2013-2014 school year), statewide education expenditures (excluding charter and state-run schools) increased from \$2,039.3 million to \$2,090.8 million (2.5 percent). Of the \$51.5 million net increase in education spending, suburban districts accounted for \$31.9 million (62.0 percent), emerging suburban districts accounted for \$11.7 million (22.6 percent), urban core districts accounted for \$5.4 million (10.4 percent) and urban ring districts accounted for \$2.6 million (5.0 percent).

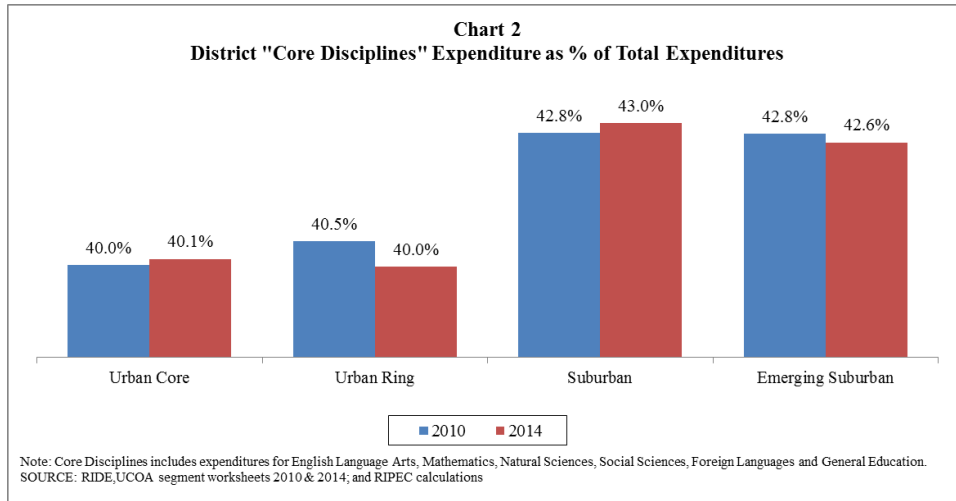
### Total Per Pupil Expenditures

On a per pupil basis, statewide education expenditures increased from \$14,978 per pupil in FY 2010 to \$15,903 in FY 2014, an increase of 6.2 percent. Although per pupil expenditures increased in all four district categories during this time period, the magnitude of the increase varied between categories. The smallest increase in per pupil expenditures occurred in urban core districts, where they increased by 1.1 percent, from \$15,808 per pupil to \$15,986 per pupil. The largest increase occurred in emerging suburban districts, where expenditures increased by 10.6 percent from \$14,610 per pupil to \$16,154 per pupil.

### Per Pupil Expenditures on Core Disciplines

For the purposes of this report, expenditures for the “core disciplines” of English language arts, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, foreign languages and general education were aggregated into a single category. These courses generally represent the foundational courses of a public education. Statewide, expenditures for core disciplines accounted for 41.3 percent of total per pupil expenditures in FY 2014. This was a decline of 0.1 percent from FY 2010, when core discipline expenditures accounted for 41.4 percent of total per pupil expenditures. Among the four district categories, urban core and urban ring districts spent a slightly lesser percentage of total per pupil expenditures on the core disciplines than suburban or emerging suburban districts.

Statewide, expenditures for core disciplines totaled \$6,519 per pupil in FY 2014, an increase of \$325 per pupil, or 5.3 percent, from FY 2010. Similar to the trend observed in total per pupil expenditures, all four district categories experienced an increase in core discipline expenditures during this time period, but the size of the increase varied. The increase was smallest in the urban core districts, which saw core disciplines expenditures increase by \$92 per pupil, or 1.5 percent. Conversely, the increase was greatest in suburban districts, where core disciplines expenditures increased by \$630 per pupil, or 10.1 percent.

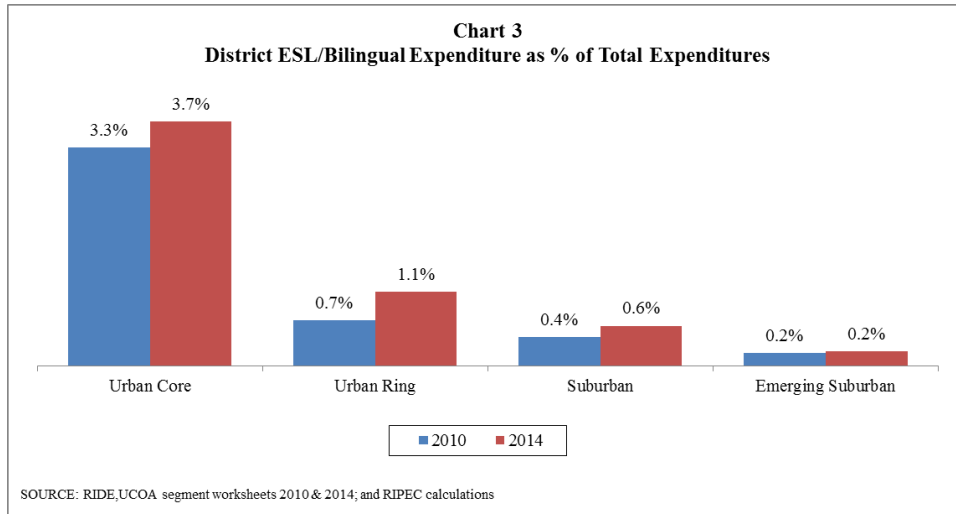


Although most school districts across the state increased per pupil expenditures for core disciplines between FY 2010 and FY 2014, some districts did experience declines in spending. Expenditures for core disciplines in Newport decreased by \$1,639 per pupil, or 17.8 percent, during this time period. Similarly, expenditures for core disciplines declined by \$1,201 per pupil, or 16.3 percent, in Central Falls. Other districts with declines in per pupil expenditures for core disciplines included Burrillville, Cranston, East Providence, Foster, Gloucester, Jamestown, Johnston, New Shoreham, North Providence and Westerly.

#### Per Pupil Expenditures on ESL/Bilingual Programs

The UCOA system includes figures for expenditures on courses and materials related to English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual studies. In FY 2014, ESL/Bilingual program expenditures accounted for 1.7 percent of total statewide per pupil expenditures. ESL/Bilingual program expenditures accounted for a greater percentage of total per pupil expenditures in the urban core districts than in the other three district categories. In FY 2014, these expenditures accounted for 3.7 percent of total per pupil expenditures in urban core districts, compared to 1.1 percent in urban ring districts, 0.6 percent in suburban districts and 0.2 percent in emerging suburban districts.

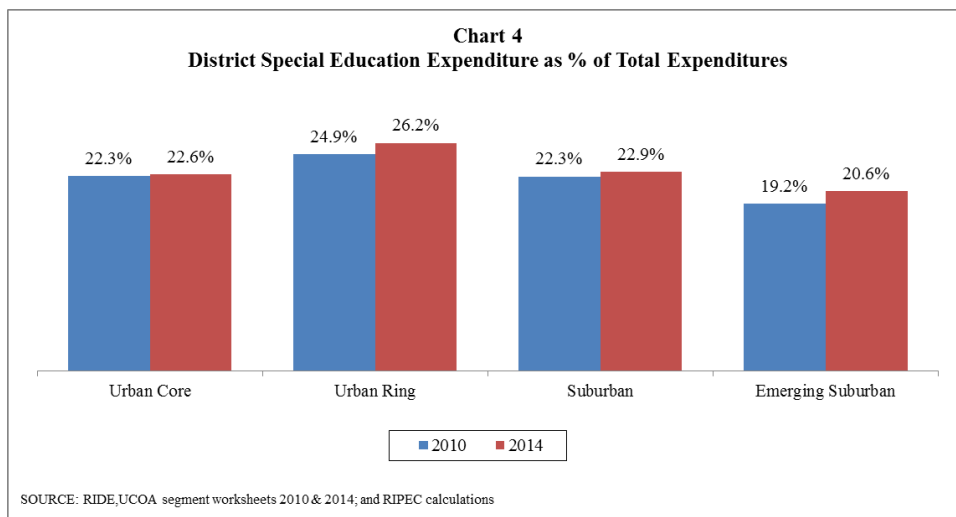
Statewide, expenditures for ESL/Bilingual programs increased by \$55 per pupil, or 26.1 percent, between FY 2010 and FY 2014. Although per pupil expenditures for these programs are greatest in urban core districts, they increased at a greater rate in each of the other three district categories between the two years. In urban ring districts, ESL/Bilingual per pupil expenditures increased by 71.4 percent between FY 2010 and FY 2014. Similarly, per pupil expenditures on these programs increased by 54.0 percent in suburban districts and 25.8 percent in emerging suburban districts.



Among individual school districts, expenditures for ESL/Bilingual programs are greatest in Central Falls, where they totaled \$1,448 per pupil in FY 2014 and represented 8.2 percent of total per pupil expenditures. Other districts with high levels of expenditures for these programs in FY 2014 included New Shoreham (\$674 per pupil), Pawtucket (\$631 per pupil), Providence (\$621 per pupil) and Cranston (\$325 per pupil). It should be noted that New Shoreham’s per pupil expenditures may be misleading as a result of the small school enrollment in that community.

*Per Pupil Expenditures on Special Education Programs*

The UCOA system also includes data relating to expenditures for special education programs. In FY 2014, these expenditures accounted for 23.2 percent of total statewide per pupil education expenditures. This was an increase of 0.8 percent from FY 2010, when special education programs accounted for 22.4 percent of total statewide per pupil expenditures. Special education programs account for a similar percentage of total per pupil expenditures in each of the four district categories: 22.6 percent in urban core districts, 26.2 percent in urban ring districts, 22.9 percent in suburban districts and 20.6 percent in emerging suburban districts.



Statewide, per pupil expenditures for special education programs increased by \$329 per pupil, or 9.8 percent, between FY 2010 and FY 2014. These per pupil expenditures also increased in each of the four district categories over the same time period. The largest percentage increase occurred in emerging suburban districts (19.0 percent), followed by suburban districts (13.0 percent), urban ring districts (10.9 percent) and urban core districts (2.2 percent). Statewide, special education expenditures totaled \$3,682 per pupil in FY 2014.

Per pupil expenditures for special education programs increased, or stayed the same, in all but four school districts between FY 2010 and FY 2014. The four districts where these expenditures declined were Jamestown (-13.1 percent), Central Falls (-5.4 percent), East Providence (-3.8 percent) and Johnston (-0.1 percent). The districts with the largest percentage increases in per pupil expenditures for special education programs were Gloucester (40.1 percent), Burrillville (37.7 percent), Middletown (34.1 percent), Coventry (33.6 percent) and Exeter-West Greenwich (30.9 percent).

**Table 20**  
**Selected Expenditures by Subject per Pupil**  
**FY 2010 - 2014**

School Districts	Total Per Pupil Expenditure				Core Disciplines*				ESL and Bilingual				Special Education			
	\$ Amount		Change		\$ Amount		Change		\$ Amount		Change		\$ Amount		Change	
	FY 2010	FY 2014	\$ Amount	Percent	FY 2010	FY 2014	\$ Amount	Percent	FY 2010	FY 2014	\$ Amount	Percent	FY 2010	FY 2014	\$ Amount	Percent
<i>Urban Core</i>																
Central Falls	\$19,886	\$17,729	-\$2,157	-10.8%	\$7,387	\$6,186	-\$1,201	-16.3%	\$1,294	\$1,448	\$154	11.9%	\$5,192	\$4,910	-\$282	-5.4%
Newport	19,856	19,828	-28	-0.1%	9,215	7,576	-1,639	-17.8%	98	225	127	129.1%	3,708	3,870	162	4.4%
Pawtucket	12,973	13,634	661	5.1%	4,978	5,646	668	13.4%	552	631	79	14.3%	2,999	3,231	232	7.7%
Providence	16,645	17,050	405	2.4%	6,867	6,973	106	1.5%	539	621	82	15.2%	3,534	3,557	23	0.7%
Woonsocket	13,563	13,116	-447	-3.3%	4,739	5,031	292	6.2%	266	181	-85	-31.9%	3,499	3,683	183	5.2%
<i>Weighted Average</i>	\$15,808	\$15,986	\$178	1.1%	6,322	\$6,414	\$92	1.5%	\$528	\$598	\$70	13.2%	\$3,531	\$3,608	\$77	2.2%
<i>Urban Ring</i>																
Cranston	\$13,644	\$14,637	\$993	7.3%	6,086	\$6,062	-\$24	-0.4%	\$147	\$325	\$178	121.6%	\$3,150	\$3,702	\$552	17.5%
East Providence	14,214	14,438	224	1.6%	4,821	4,785	-35	-0.7%	91	164	72	79.2%	4,499	4,328	-171	-3.8%
North Providence	15,004	14,736	-268	-1.8%	6,225	6,110	-115	-1.8%	135	112	-23	-17.3%	3,261	4,229	968	29.7%
Warwick	16,343	17,989	1,647	10.1%	6,737	7,392	655	9.7%	53	66	12	23.4%	4,052	4,490	439	10.8%
West Warwick	15,147	15,451	304	2.0%	5,543	6,302	759	13.7%	113	128	15	12.9%	3,393	3,759	365	10.8%
<i>Weighted Average</i>	\$14,874	\$15,678	\$804	5.4%	6,024	\$6,264	\$240	4.0%	\$103	\$177	\$74	71.4%	\$3,699	\$4,102	\$403	10.9%
<i>Suburban</i>																
Barrington	\$12,682	\$14,441	\$1,759	13.9%	5,761	\$6,508	\$747	13.0%	\$56	\$79	\$23	41.0%	\$2,813	\$3,336	\$523	18.6%
Bristol-Warren	14,817	15,701	884	6.0%	6,034	6,384	350	5.8%	129	129	0	0.2%	2,879	3,086	208	7.2%
Cumberland	11,207	12,833	1,626	14.5%	5,065	5,845	780	15.4%	100	146	46	45.6%	2,259	2,635	376	16.6%
East Greenwich	14,103	14,991	888	6.3%	5,634	5,792	159	2.8%	36	44	8	22.3%	3,092	3,747	655	21.2%
Jamestown	25,378	24,266	-1,112	-4.4%	12,316	11,957	-359	-2.9%	35	108	73	209.7%	6,349	5,515	-834	-13.1%
Johnston	16,954	17,214	260	1.5%	6,233	6,131	-102	-1.6%	116	202	86	74.6%	5,040	5,038	-3	-0.1%
Lincoln	15,489	17,005	1,516	9.8%	6,257	6,754	496	7.9%	75	73	-2	-2.7%	3,999	4,138	139	3.5%
Middletown	13,756	16,317	2,561	18.6%	5,604	6,479	876	15.6%	19	35	17	88.9%	2,827	3,791	964	34.1%
Narragansett	18,163	19,623	1,460	8.0%	7,307	8,660	1,354	18.5%	8	17	9	116.4%	4,096	4,170	74	1.8%
North Kingstown	13,983	15,449	1,466	10.5%	6,119	6,899	780	12.8%	97	89	-9	-8.8%	3,001	3,256	255	8.5%
Portsmouth	13,154	14,692	1,538	11.7%	5,560	6,259	698	12.6%	0	8	8	80000.0%	2,752	3,265	514	18.7%
Smithfield	13,942	15,009	1,067	7.7%	5,675	6,067	392	6.9%	19	21	2	10.3%	2,756	3,317	561	20.3%
Westerly	15,994	18,819	2,824	17.7%	8,514	7,965	-549	-6.5%	1	192	190	13659.5%	3,364	4,328	964	28.7%
<i>Weighted Average</i>	\$14,364	\$15,842	\$1,477	10.3%	6,154	\$6,630	\$476	7.7%	\$63	\$96	\$34	54.0%	\$3,205	\$3,623	\$418	13.0%
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>																
Burrillville	\$12,445	\$13,644	\$1,199	9.6%	5,564	\$5,529	-\$35	-0.6%	\$7	\$11	\$4	64.5%	\$2,323	\$3,200	\$877	37.7%
Chariho	15,588	16,566	978	6.3%	6,699	7,567	868	13.0%	35	50	15	42.5%	2,891	2,909	18	0.6%
Coventry	12,598	14,103	1,504	11.9%	5,374	6,011	638	11.9%	22	36	14	60.7%	2,374	3,173	798	33.6%
Exeter-West Greenwich	16,327	19,716	3,389	20.8%	6,748	8,056	1,308	19.4%	47	90	43	90.2%	3,309	4,330	1,022	30.9%
Foster	19,679	14,831	-4,847	-24.6%	9,316	7,370	-1,946	-20.9%	0	0	0	--	2,830	2,829	-1	0.0%
Foster-Glocester	13,387	16,436	3,049	22.8%	5,706	6,628	922	16.2%	3	0	-3	-100.0%	1,772	2,115	343	19.3%
Glocester	17,144	17,423	279	1.6%	8,775	8,639	-136	-1.6%	0	0	0	--	2,392	3,351	959	40.1%
Little Compton	21,179	28,852	7,674	36.2%	10,834	14,833	4,000	36.9%	0	0	0	--	2,618	3,406	788	30.1%
New Shoreham	35,984	39,353	3,368	9.4%	14,478	14,447	-32	-0.2%	630	674	44	6.9%	6,969	8,898	1,928	27.7%
North Smithfield	12,723	14,329	1,606	12.6%	4,798	5,532	734	15.3%	31	7	-24	-77.8%	2,774	3,427	654	23.6%
Scituate	13,396	15,557	2,161	16.1%	6,506	7,220	714	11.0%	0	0	0	--	2,116	2,199	83	3.9%
South Kingstown	17,279	17,861	582	3.4%	7,231	7,654	423	5.9%	32	36	3	10.2%	3,792	3,934	142	3.7%
Tiverton	14,444	16,411	1,967	13.6%	5,665	6,286	621	11.0%	43	40	-4	-9.0%	3,354	4,036	682	20.3%
<i>Weighted Average</i>	\$14,610	\$16,154	\$1,544	10.6%	6,256	\$6,887	\$630	10.1%	\$28	\$35	\$7	25.8%	\$2,803	\$3,335	\$531	19.0%
<b>RI Statewide Average</b>	\$14,978	\$15,903	\$925	6.2%	6,193	\$6,519	\$325	5.3%	\$210	\$265	\$55	26.1%	\$3,353	\$3,682	\$329	9.8%

\*Core Disciplines include expenditures for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Foreign Languages and General Education.  
SOURCE: Rhode Island Department of Education, UCOA segment worksheets 2010 & 2014; and RIPEC calculations SOURCE: RIDE, UCOA segment worksheets 2010 & 2014; and RIPEC calculations

*Teacher Salaries by District*

Teacher salaries and pay scales vary across public school districts in Rhode Island, and wages only represent one component of the overall compensation package provided to educators. Nevertheless, an analysis of the pay scale in place in each school district provides some insight into the ability of districts to attract high-quality teachers, as well as the associated labor costs. Most districts have ten total steps, though several districts use a scale with eleven or twelve steps. Generally speaking, teachers advance up the salary scale based on their experience and level of education. The salary scale in effect in each school district is one component of the collective bargaining agreement negotiated between the local teachers' union and school committee. As a result, every public school district in Rhode Island has a scale that begins and

ends at different salary levels. For example, a new teacher hired in Providence would likely start at the first step, earning \$39,261 annually, and, over time, could advance up to the top step, paying \$74,003 annually.

School Districts	2005-2006		2015-2016		First Step Change		Top Step Change	
	First Step	Top Step	First Step	Top Step	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
<i>Urban Core</i>								
Central Falls	\$40,485	\$64,023	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newport	35,016	62,489	\$43,052	\$76,837	\$8,036	22.9%	\$14,348	23.0%
Pawtucket	32,829	61,715	39,216	73,720	6,387	19.5%	12,005	19.5%
Providence	34,527	65,080	39,261	74,003	4,734	13.7%	8,923	13.7%
Woonsocket	35,457	62,221	39,914	70,042	4,457	12.6%	7,821	12.6%
<i>Urban Ring</i>								
Cranston	\$34,306	\$64,096	\$38,760	\$75,378	\$4,454	13.0%	\$11,282	17.6%
East Providence	34,388	62,841	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Providence	33,726	62,400	37,393	71,461	3,667	10.9%	9,061	14.5%
Warwick	N/A	N/A	42,022	70,561	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West Warwick	36,749	64,878	37,633	72,489	884	2.4%	7,611	11.7%
<i>Suburban</i>								
Barrington	\$35,562	\$65,084	\$41,237	\$81,954	\$5,675	16.0%	\$16,870	25.9%
Bristol-Warren	34,872	64,288	40,243	77,353	5,371	15.4%	13,065	20.3%
Cumberland	32,774	57,354	42,519	77,201	9,745	29.7%	19,847	34.6%
East Greenwich	34,376	64,889	41,286	78,898	6,910	20.1%	14,009	21.6%
Jamestown	34,527	63,715	41,512	77,235	6,985	20.2%	13,520	21.2%
Johnston	35,366	63,940	39,811	73,235	4,445	12.6%	9,295	14.5%
Lincoln	36,026	64,571	40,660	80,523	4,634	12.9%	15,952	24.7%
Middletown	35,338	64,610	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Narragansett	34,763	64,567	41,199	79,620	6,436	18.5%	15,053	23.3%
North Kingstown	35,254	64,018	42,426	77,043	7,172	20.3%	13,025	20.3%
Portsmouth	34,110	64,481	41,724	76,652	7,614	22.3%	12,171	18.9%
Smithfield	35,061	63,837	40,598	75,564	5,537	15.8%	11,727	18.4%
Westerly	36,097	69,489	48,000	81,905	11,903	33.0%	12,416	17.9%
<i>Emerging Suburban</i>								
Burrillville	\$34,002	\$64,545	\$35,958	\$72,259	\$1,956	5.8%	\$7,714	12.0%
Chariho	34,904	63,520	44,688	72,664	9,784	28.0%	9,144	14.4%
Coventry	38,100	67,300	44,306	79,026	6,206	16.3%	11,726	17.4%
Exeter-West Greenwich	33,397	64,891	39,330	78,786	5,933	17.8%	13,895	21.4%
Foster	34,872	64,018	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Foster-Glocester	32,432	61,567	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Glocester	36,587	63,191	40,668	74,172	4,081	11.2%	10,981	17.4%
Little Compton	33,464	60,940	41,222	74,379	7,758	23.2%	13,439	22.1%
New Shoreham	35,103	62,634	41,485	76,051	6,382	18.2%	13,417	21.4%
North Smithfield	33,767	62,824	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scituate	35,747	64,808	41,894	76,613	6,147	17.2%	11,805	18.2%
South Kingstown	33,910	62,184	39,318	76,582	5,408	15.9%	14,398	23.2%
Tiverton	34,450	62,335	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Rhode Island Average</b>	<b>\$34,924</b>	<b>\$63,696</b>	<b>\$40,943</b>	<b>\$75,938</b>	<b>\$6,018</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>\$12,243</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
<small>Note: N/A means that data was not available as of publication          SOURCE: Rhode Island Association of School Committees; RIPEC calculations</small>								

Across all school districts for which data was available for the 2015-2016 school year (data was unavailable for seven of 36 public school districts), the first step of the teacher pay scale averaged \$40,943, while the top step averaged \$75,938. For the 2015-2016 school year, the greatest first step was in Westerly, where a teacher at that step would earn \$48,000. During the same school year, the lowest first step was in Burrillville, where a teacher at that step would earn

\$35,958. Also for the 2015-2016 school year, the greatest top step was in Barrington, where a teacher at that step would earn \$81,954. During the same school year, the lowest top step was in Woonsocket, where a teacher at that step would earn \$70,042. It should be noted that, for the 17 school districts for which data was available for the 2015-2016 school year, 75.6 percent of teachers had reached the top step.

Historical data indicates that the average first step statewide increased by 17.2 percent from \$34,924 to \$40,943 between the 2005-2006 and 2015-2016 school years. Similarly, the average top step statewide increased by 19.2 percent from \$63,696 to \$75,938 during the same ten-year period. Among individual school districts, the largest percentage increase in the first step occurred in Westerly (33.0 percent), while the smallest percentage increase occurred in West Warwick (2.4 percent). For the top step, the largest percentage increase occurred in Cumberland (34.6 percent), while the smallest percentage increase occurred in West Warwick (11.7 percent).