

# How a Whole Child Approach Can Transform Education in Rhode Island

**Policy Analysis and Action Agenda**

Produced by





### **OUR MISSION:**

The mission of Rhode Island ASCD, a community of educators, is to improve the quality of learning, teaching, and leading for the success of each learner.

### **OUR VISION:**

Rhode Island ASCD is a leading source for professional learning in Rhode Island. Its exemplary programs, services, and partnerships influence policies and practices for the benefit of the Rhode Island educational community and the subsequent success of students.

# How a Whole Child Approach Can Transform Education in Rhode Island

## Policy Analysis and Action Agenda

### Introduction

*What does it mean to educate the whole child?  
“To educate all aspects of a child; educating with schoolwork  
but also developing their mind and body” RI high school student*

In 2007, ASCD introduced the Whole Child Compact to the nation. This initiative was cutting edge at the time, and built its expertise on the accumulated knowledge and experience of educators, health care professionals, researchers, business people, community leaders and others. The work was meant to “recast the definition of a successful learner from one whose achievement is measured solely by academic tests to one who is knowledgeable, emotionally and physically active, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, and prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling.” (Brown, Educating the Whole Child: An ASCD Action Tool, pg.1) In an effort to localize their effort, Rhode Island ASCD (RIASCD), a professional organization and local affiliate of ASCD dedicated to leadership development for teaching and learning, has embarked on efforts to adopt a Whole Child approach to education in Rhode Island.

*“The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) commends the Rhode Island Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (RIASCD) for its leadership in developing the whole-child approach to transforming education. Based on the belief that all students must be healthy, safe, supported, challenged, and engaged, the whole-child approach requires schools, families, and communities to work together to improve education for all students. These principles of partnership and support for students align well with our strategic plan, Transforming Education in Rhode Island, as well as with the Rhode Island Basic Education Program. Over the past decade, RIDE has invested in efforts that address the whole-child approach to engage students and families and to strengthen educational achievement. We applaud RIASCD for this comprehensive report on how the whole-child approach can help to transform education in our state. Working together with our partners in the education field and in the community, we will make Rhode Island the home of America’s best public schools!”*

Deborah A. Gist  
Rhode Island Commissioner of Education

*“Health and academic outcomes are linked. Our data on Rhode Island youth demonstrate that children who do well in school tend to practice healthy behaviors and that children who are not doing well tend to take more health risks. These data underscore how essential it is to create environments in schools and communities that support healthy choices as the easiest choices. A Whole Child Approach allows schools and communities to broadly develop, implement, integrate and evaluate strategies necessary for youth to be healthy and successful.”*

David R. Gifford, MD, MPH  
Director of Health, State of Rhode Island

The Whole Child Initiative is based on the belief that to educate all children effectively means paying attention to more than school buildings, curriculum and resources. The Whole Child is a broad concept that requires integration of efforts among schools, families and communities. To fully grasp the concept that in order for a child to be educated successfully, he/she must be healthy, safe, supported, challenged, and engaged requires a paradigm shift in the way we think about and organize schools/communities. It requires partnerships to achieve a goal that is beyond the scope of any one organization. It is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning.



RI Student Community Conversation voices on “what it means to educate the whole child?”  
(interspersed throughout the report)

## The Beginning

In 2009, RIASCD applied for and received a grant to begin Whole Child work in our state. The work involved a systematic plan for educating our membership and our potential partner organizations about the tenets of the Whole Child Initiative. The work began by looking at the regulations and policies currently in place in Rhode Island and cross-walking them with the five tenets of the Whole Child Initiative; developing a strengths and gap analysis; and finally convening discussion groups around what exists and what needs to exist. This policy paper is the culmination of the initial phase of our work.

RIASCD's collaboration with other professional organizations has served to connect efforts and strengthen the influence of a whole child approach in Rhode Island. Partnerships are necessary to address all aspects of the whole child. Organizations can also partner with schools to address the needs of children and families that influence education but may be beyond the scope of traditional education services. Further, commitment to a whole child approach to education can create opportunities for rich community discussions leading to integration and synergy of efforts.

## The Context and Rationale

School classification data from the RI Department of Education (2010) illustrate that nearly four of every five schools (230 out of 292 schools, or 79%) met all of the targets in the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The classifications, based on results of the 2009-10 state assessments in mathematics, reading, and writing as well as the 2008-09 attendance and four-year graduation rates, showed that 85 percent of the elementary schools (153 out of 179 schools), 88 percent of the middle schools (49 out of 56 schools), and 49 percent of the high schools (28 out of 57 schools) met all of their targets. Despite improvements in many districts since the advent of No Child Left Behind, gaps continue to exist especially in urban districts at the high school level.

***High school graduation is the minimum requisite for college and most employment. Dropping out of school and not becoming part of the workforce places teens at a significant disadvantage as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. These adolescents have a difficult time getting connected to the job market as young adults and have less stable employment histories than their peers who stayed in school or secured jobs.*** (Boston, MA, Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies)

***High school dropouts are also more likely to have a range of negative social outcomes as compared to people who graduate from high school, including unemployment, living in poverty, receiving public assistance, incarceration, having poor health, and being single parents of children who also drop out of school.*** (Fact Sheet: National Summit on America's Silent Epidemic.)

In an effort to address gaps, Rhode Island has pursued rigorous education reform measures. In 2008, the RI Board of Regents revised and adopted Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education

K-12 Literacy, Restructuring of the Learning Environment at the Middle and High School Levels, and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements at High Schools. Most recently in 2009, the Board of Regents adopted a revised Basic Education Program, outlining minimum outcome requirements for education in Rhode Island schools. In 2010, Leadership Standards were adopted by the Regents, and work is underway to develop an educator evaluation system that will include protocols by which RI educators are admitted to the profession and how they stay certified.

Research studies have shown that accountability for education outcomes has increased within an environment of complex social problems. Schools need support for building a broader context that includes ways for schools to have a positive influence on factors not always directly in their control and beyond traditional education approaches.

***Parental educational attainment can have an impact on many aspects of child well-being, including children's health and health-related behaviors, the level of education children will ultimately achieve, and their access to material, human and social resources.*** (2010 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook)

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has selected increasing high school graduation rates to 90% as an official health objective for the nation for the year 2010. The interrelationship between health and academic achievement is cyclical.

***During the 2008-2009 school year, Rhode Island public school personnel identified 1,099 children as homeless. Of these children, 57% (622) were living in shelters, 38% (423) were doubled up, 4% (46) were living in hotels or motels, and 1% (8) were unsheltered.*** (Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.)

Children who come to school ready to learn become children who leave school ready to lead productive lives. Overall achievement in education is a predictor of lifelong health. Although testing is an important strategy for measuring student success, a Whole Child approach challenges education leaders to consider the broader implications of education reform agendas. A Whole Child approach encourages school leaders to address issues such as lack of access to health care, which impact education, but are not typically considered a role of schools. Integration of the tenets is also a part of the approach. For example, a rigorous and challenging curriculum is not only essential to help students reach standards for learning; it also helps students feel engaged in school.

The power of the whole child approach is in the identification of partners that can help schools meet their educational mission by addressing issues impacting children's learning beyond the school walls. Partnerships foster collective efforts on behalf of school aged children.

The whole child approach encourages education leaders to broaden their ideas about what is necessary for school success. RIASCD set out to research the feasibility and efficacy of this approach in Rhode Island.

## **Methodology**

• RIASCD reached out and convened a broad range of education organizations in Rhode Island to provide information on the work of RIASCD and the Whole Child initiative. All local chapters of ASCD whole child partners, as well as other RI based organizations that in some way impact or are impacted by schools, were invited to participate.

### **Our partners:**

Rhode Island Department of Education  
Rhode Island Department of Health  
Healthy Schools Coalition  
RI Association of Physical Education, Health, Recreation and Dance  
RI Superintendents Association  
RI Association of School Principals  
RI Middle Level Educators  
RI Certified School Nurse Teacher Association  
RI Kids Count  
New England Secondary Schools Consortium (NESSC)  
VSA Arts of Rhode Island  
RI Association of School Committees  
RI Psychological Association  
Learning First Alliance/ Rhode Island

• RIASCD developed a strengths and gaps analysis of policies and programs by crosswalking the tenets of the Whole Child against the Rhode Island education reform agenda.

### **List of reform initiatives included in the work:**

RI Basic Education Program  
Commissioner's Strategic Plan  
Middle School/High School Regulations  
English Language Learner Regulations  
Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs  
Special Education Regulations  
School Construction Regulations  
Leadership Standards  
RIDE School Visits  
NESSC Global Best Practice Tool  
Pre-Kindergarten Standards  
Physical Education Standards  
Health Education Standards  
Educator Evaluation Standards (Not Available)  
School Counselor Framework  
RI Nutrition Requirements  
NEASC 2011 Standards

• RIASCD convened community conversations to identify support and barriers to the Whole Child that will inform a collaborative local influence agenda. Convened student community conversations at four high schools, and four adult community conversations around the state. Compiled data from all conversations.

• Spoke about the Whole Child Initiative at all of the RIASCD General Membership meetings 2009-2010, at all RIASCD Board meetings, at the RI Counselors Association meeting in March, at monthly meetings with the Commissioner of Education for Rhode Island, at the Rhode Island Civics and History Institute in June, and at the Rhode Island Association of School Principals Summer Institute in August 2010 and posted information about our work on our website.

• Sponsored and shared information at RI Healthy Schools Coalition Breakfasts in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

• RIASCD published and disseminated a policy paper on recommended state and local actions to facilitate incorporation of a Whole Child approach to education in RI.

The data below, compiled both in table form and vertically, specifically defines how each of the regulations addresses each of the tenets.

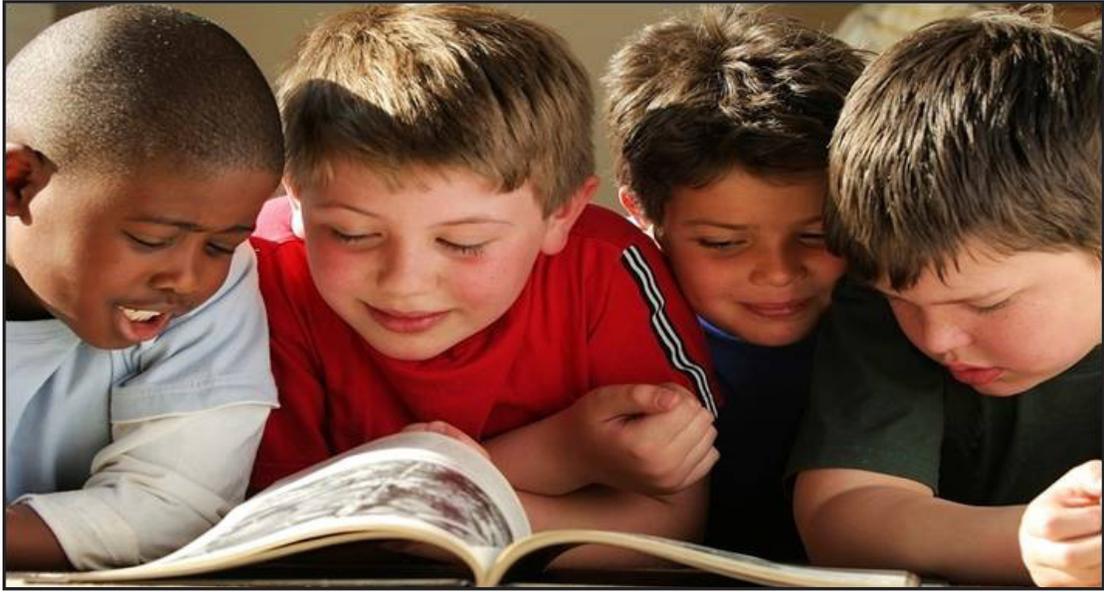


**ASCD WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE: REVISED JUNE 2010**  
**(A COMPARISON OF THE ASCD WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE TO OTHER SCHOOL INITIATIVES)**



## Whole Child Initiative Essential Elements and Components

<b>To ensure that all students are healthy, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:</b>
A school health advisory council with students, family, community, and business members
Students be routinely screened for immunizations, vision, hearing, dental, and orthopedic concerns
PE and health classes emphasize lifetime healthy behaviors
Healthy food choices are available at school
<b>To ensure that all students are safe, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:</b>
Students, school staff, and family members establish and maintain behavioral expectations, rules, and routines
Families are welcomed by school staff as partners in their children's education
<b>To ensure that all students are adequately engaged, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:</b>
Students may participate in a wide array of extracurricular activities
Schools provide opportunities for community-based apprenticeships, internships, or projects
Teachers use active learning strategies such as cooperative learning and project-based learning
<b>To ensure that all students are adequately supported, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:</b>
Every student has an adult advisor or mentor
Students have access to school counselors or other student support systems
<b>To ensure that all students are academically challenged with a well-balanced curriculum, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:</b>
Schools provide a well-rounded curriculum for all students
Students have access to rigorous programs in arts, foreign languages, and social studies
Schools maintain flexible graduation requirements



RI Basic Education Plan	Commissioner's Strategic Plan	MS / HS Regulations	English Language Learners Regulations	School Health Regulations	Special Education Regulations	School Construction Regulations	Leadership Standards	RIDE School Visits	NESSC Global Best Practice Tool	Pre K/Kindergarten Standards	Physical Education Standards	Health Education Standards	School Counseling Framework	RI Nutrition Requirements	NEASC 2011 Standards
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**EMH = Elementary, Middle, High**  
 Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools is one set of standards.  
 Commission on High Schools is second set of standards.

## Ensure all students are healthy:

### RI Nutrition Standards

- ✓The Federal Law promulgated by the USDA requires that School Districts have a school food authority/wellness committee. The RI District Health and Wellness law passed in 2005 enabled this federal legislation.
- ✓BMI is collected in some schools and at some point may be available school by school.
- ✓The RI Nutrition Requirements ensures that healthy food choices are available at school.

### Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs

- ✓Requires each school district to have a district health and wellness committee responsible for nutrition, physical activity, health education, physical education, and staff wellness efforts. The focus to date in most districts has been mainly on nutrition and physical activity. The power of these committees to make change varies across districts.
- ✓Requires screening for immunizations, vision, hearing, dental, school entry and 7th grade physical requirements. The standards surrounding all school based health services are high as compared to other states.
- ✓Physical education and health education are standards based with an emphasis on lifetime healthy behaviors. The implementation varies across schools and is difficult to monitor.

### Early Learning Standards, Preschool and Pre K Regulations

- ✓Health advisory councils are not required in the regulations but are required in Head Start programs to address health education, physical health, mental health and other areas.
- ✓There is one statewide advisory board.
- ✓The regulations require an overall health developmental screening. Child Outreach Screening is conducted in all districts as part of the IDEA child find, 80% of 3, 4, and 5 year olds are screened.
- ✓Developmentally appropriate physical education and health education are required.
- ✓Healthy food choices need more specific emphasis within the DCYF regulations.

### School Construction Regulations

- ✓Decisions still need to be made on how the required High Performance School Design Committee fits into existing school improvement structures. Innovation is needed to bridge the gap between construction and the curriculum.
- ✓Physical education and health education need to be connected to Safe Routes to Schools and No Child Left Inside efforts. Promote health by having healthy places.

### RI Basic Education Program

- ✓Requires that schools comply with the existing Health Services section of the Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs, addressing school health staff, health and dental screenings, physical examinations, records review and maintenance, medication administration, emergency

care, chronic disease care, compliance with immunization regulations, and compliance with any other state or federal health related regulations and statutes.

- ✓Requires that schools address mental and emotional health issues directly impeding students' abilities to learn. Such issues include bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, anxiety, and domestic violence, as well as psychiatric disorders through onsite or referral systems with credentialed staff. Also requires coordination with community efforts and programs on youth development.
- ✓Outreach strategies will be utilized to support families' access to health and social services through on-site services and/or through effective referral systems to address a comprehensive array of issues, including but not limited to hunger, housing, homelessness, health insurance, employment, pregnant and parenting teens, family illness, child abuse and domestic violence, legal issues, and issues related to foster care and Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) custody
- ✓Ensure the provision of statutorily required, standards-based instruction in physical education.
- ✓Implement a policy for physical activity and nutrition and a plan to address the physical activity and nutrition needs of students including recess, stretch breaks, dance programs or classes, intramural athletics, interscholastic athletics, or other activities.
- ✓Ensure that schools implement and comply with state and federal statutes and regulations that promote good nutrition, including those related to school food service programs and snacks.

### Leadership Standards

- ✓Leaders ensure a safe environment by addressing real and potential challenges to the physical and emotional safety and security of the school community that interrupt learning and teaching.
- ✓Leaders partner with families and community members to develop and evaluate programs, services, and staff outreach to improve student learning.

### RIDE School Visits

- ✓PE and Health curriculum would be subject to review during any visit.
- ✓Visits ensure that requirements under regulations and the BEP are maintained in schools and districts.

### Physical Education Standards

- ✓Applies physical activity related skills and concepts to maintain a physically active lifestyle and a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
- ✓Demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings
- ✓Understands that internal and external environments influence physical activity.

### Health Education Standards

- ✓Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, community, and environmental health.

## Ensure all students are safe:

### RI Nutrition Standards

✓Parents are included in District Health and Wellness Subcommittees. Schools need to engage parents as part of the RI Nutrition Requirements and Team Nutrition.

### Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs

✓Schools have behavioral handbooks that are not required in the regulations. The regulations require policy and curriculum development around bullying, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, and teen dating violence.

### Early Learning Standards, Preschool and Pre K Regulations

✓Regulations require that family members are involved in programming. Strategies to support family involvement are required by Head Start, DCYF licensed child care programs.

### School Construction Regulations

✓Safety of facilities is emphasized including attention to Asbestos, Radon and Lead Regulations promulgated by the RI Department of Health apply to schools.  
✓EPA Tools for Schools encourage parent and student input into building issues, cleaning, and related issues.  
✓Chemical Safe School Committee helped to rid schools of hazardous chemicals used in science labs.

### RI Basic Education Program

✓Create a climate of safety, security and belonging for all students and adults, thereby establishing an environment that builds respectful relationships, enhances productive learning and teaching, promotes school engagement, and promotes academic success.  
✓Build a safe and respectful learning environment.  
✓Identify and remove barriers to students and adults that are based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, language, gender, religion, economic status, disability, or sexual orientation.  
✓Comply with all relevant state and federal statutes and regulations regarding discrimination.  
✓Ensure that students who are on school grounds before, during, and after school, during recess, and during other intermissions are appropriately supervised by adults.  
✓Follow state statute that states that each student and staff member has a right to attend or work at a school that is safe and secure, that is conducive to learning, and that is free from the threat, actual or implied, of physical harm.  
✓Prevent and respond appropriately to incidents of bullying, hazing, teen dating violence, sexual violence, and related issues.  
✓Promote nonviolent conflict resolution techniques in order to encourage attitudes and behaviors that foster harmonious relations.

✓Provide professional development, training, resources, and other means to assist students, staff, and other adults in the school building or at school sponsored activities in carrying out these responsibilities; and comply with relevant state and federal statutes regarding these issues.  
✓Ensure that schools promote a positive climate with emphasis on mutual respect, self-control, good attendance, order and organization, and proper security.  
✓Develop protocols that define a set of discipline strategies and constructs that ensure that students and adults make positive behavioral choices that are conducive to a safe and nurturing environment that promotes academic success.  
✓Ensure that parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.  
✓Facilitate partnerships with community organizations and agencies, municipal entities, and businesses to meet the needs of students and families.

### Middle School and High School Regulations

✓Ensure that every student has an individualized and optimized opportunity to achieve proficiency for graduation.  
✓All middle level schools and high schools shall implement strategies for creating more personalized learning environments.

### Leadership Standards

✓Leaders ensure a safe environment by addressing real and potential challenges to the physical and emotional safety and security of the school community that interrupt learning and teaching.

### RIDE School Visits

✓BEP and Commissioner Review structures require evidence.  
✓School culture and climate is readily apparent during a visit.  
✓Parents are routinely interviewed for their feedback and perspective during visits

### NESSC Global Best Practice Tool

✓Self assessment tool for schools to adopt global best practices. Addresses Organizational Design 2.1; Equity 1.1; Personalization 1.2, 2.2

### Physical Education Standards

✓Demonstrates responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

*“A child who is involved in and doing well in academics, sports, social things, etc”*



## Ensure all students are adequately engaged:

### RI Nutrition Standards

✓Based on new federal standards, funding is made available to States to provide low income communities support for student involvement in cooking demonstrations, preparation of local produce, connections with free fruits and vegetable programs.

### Early Learning Standards, Preschool and Pre K Regulations

✓Use of active learning strategies is a core component of a high quality early learning program.

### School Construction Regulations

✓Regulations support extracurricular activities in terms of space.

✓Schools need to look outward to communities and communities look to schools as a resource. A concerted effort is needed to make community assets and resources available.

✓Support different modes of transportation including bussing, biking and walking.

✓School curriculum should inform the building design (East Bay Met).

✓Sustainable schools create an environmental awareness through curriculum and promote understanding of the ecological role and responsibility to the community. There are opportunities to establish schools as examples of how to live green. Create a culture in school that supports the environment.

### RI Basic Education Program

✓Provide all students with multiple learning opportunities that support meeting proficiency.

✓Ensure that schools create a climate of safety, security and belonging for all students and adults, thereby establishing an environment that builds respectful relationships, enhances productive learning and teaching, promotes school engagement, and promotes academic success.

✓Build a safe and respectful learning environment.

### Middle School and High School Regulations

✓Provide students with multiple opportunities and appropriate supports to ensure students' progress toward meeting their post-secondary academic and career goals.

✓Each student exiting shall exhibit proficiency in the academic core curriculum demonstrated through multiple sources of evidence gathered over time.

### Leadership Standards

✓Leaders respond and contribute to community interests

and needs to provide the best possible education for students and their families.

✓Leaders collaborate to supervise both daily and ongoing management structures and practices that enhance learning and teaching.

✓Leaders establish an infrastructure for personnel that operates in support of learning and teaching.

✓Leaders establish an infrastructure for finance that operates in support of improving learning and teaching.

### RIDE School Visits

✓BEP and Commissioner Review structures require evidence.

✓Students are routinely interviewed for their feedback and per BEP and Commissioner Review structures require evidence. Instruction is a main focus of most visits; classrooms are routinely visited during visits

### NESSC Global Best Practice Tool

Addresses Organizational Design 2.2, 2.3; Equity 1.1  
Personalization 1.2; Academic Rigor 1.3  
International Learning 1.6

### Physical Education Standards

✓Demonstrates responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

### Health Education Standards

✓Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.



*“To prepare a student for life in the “real world.”  
To receive an entire education, a student must learn  
academically and become prepared for the future.”*



## Ensure all students are adequately supported:

### Early Learning Standards, Preschool and Pre K Regulations

- ✓Students have access to counselors if they are in a public school system.
- ✓Behavioral health plans are included in the pre-K regulations.

### School Construction Regulations

- ✓Regulations support how schools consciously consider the ways adults and students interact.

### RI Basic Education Program

- ✓Ensure that all students have the opportunity and skills necessary to access the systems of developmentally appropriate, targeted, and responsive academic supports and interventions for learning that they need to become college, work, and career ready.
- ✓Provide supplemental academic supports and interventions that are evidence-based in the areas of literacy, numeracy, science, social studies, history, and speech and English language acquisition.
- ✓Provide for students who are homebound, hospitalized, or capable of only intermittent school attendance for medical reasons.
- ✓Provide student-centered, data-driven supports and interventions utilizing a problem-solving process, building on the foundation of a guaranteed and viable comprehensive program of study.
- ✓Ensure that schools will implement strategies for creating personalized environments to optimize learning.

- ✓Establish and maintain a Comprehensive School Counseling (CSC) Program, including guidance and counseling services, available to all students in grades K-12.

### Middle School and High School Regulations

- ✓Ensure that every student has an individualized and optimized opportunity to achieve proficiency for graduation.
- ✓All middle level schools and high schools shall implement strategies for creating more personalized learning environments.

### Leadership Standards

- ✓Education leaders ensure the success of each student by supervising and managing organizational systems and resources for a safe, high performing learning environment.

### RIDE School Visits

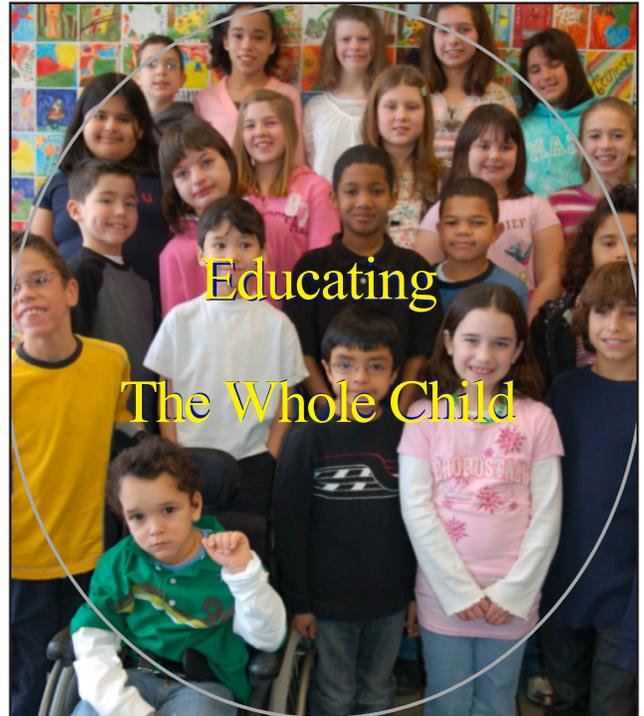
- ✓Part of PBGR review.
- ✓Advisory must be in place for middle school students.
- ✓Personalization strategies required to be in place for high school students.
- ✓Visits ensure that requirements under regulations (such as Counselor Frameworks) and the BEP are maintained in schools and districts.

### NESSC Global Best Practice Tool

Self assessment tool for schools to adopt global best practices. Addresses Standards 1.4; Assessment Practices 1.5



*“Concentrate on the individual and let students be self-directed”*



*“One complete being; every part of the child”*



## Ensure all students are Academically challenged:

### RI Nutrition Standards

✓Food service contracts state that school food providers need to be involved in education in their districts. Education includes: taste testing, menus with caloric intake, cooking demonstrations, parent engagement and other strategies to promote the RI Nutrition Requirements including more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. All three food service companies in RI have different approaches and events to promote participation in school nutrition programs.

### Early Learning Standards, Preschool and Pre K Regulations

✓Regulations require a well rounded curriculum for all students as age and developmentally appropriate.

### School Construction Regulations

✓Academics are related to building design. Efforts are necessary to bridge the gap between construction and curriculum so that the building is a teaching tool.

### Commissioner's Strategic Plan

✓Accelerate Schools to Greatness - a detailed plan.

### RI Basic Education Program

✓Implement a set of coherent, organized instructional strategies designed to ensure positive improvements in student learning.

✓Require use of The Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards (RIPTS) and the Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership to plan for professional development, provide feedback for improvement, and monitor the delivery of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students.

✓Articulate guidelines for effective instruction and design a schedule of instructional time across grades PK-12 that ensures that all students and teachers have multiple opportunities and supports to access the learning goals in the comprehensive program of study.

✓Develop a system of high quality professional development that addresses the state and national standards in the content areas, the district designed curriculum, the research-based instructional strategies and practices that focus on all students, assessment practices for monitoring student progress, and implementation of selected programs, texts, and materials with fidelity.

✓Provide common planning time within and across grades and content areas so that educators address student learning needs, monitor progress, and identify effective instructional practices.

✓Provide the necessary programs, texts, and materials that ensure that students are supported fully in acquiring the knowledge and skills specified in a comprehensive program of study.

✓Develop a comprehensive assessment system that includes measures of student performance for the purposes of formative, interim, and summative evaluations of all students in each core content area.

✓Develop policies and procedures for grading and reporting assessment data at the student, group, school, and district levels.

✓Develop an evaluation plan with timelines for ongoing and formal reviews of curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems.

### Middle School and High School Regulations

✓Support students in becoming proficient life-long learners in order to successfully pursue post-secondary academic and career goals.

✓Substantiate student proficiency by producing evidence of meeting the content standards and applied learning skills in the six core academic areas, in accordance with local diploma requirements and each student's individual learning plan.

✓Provide students with multiple opportunities and appropriate supports to ensure students' progress toward meeting their post-secondary academic and career goals.

### Leadership Standards

✓Engage multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives in constructing shared understandings and commitments to high expectations for all students.

✓Develop shared commitments and responsibilities among staff and the community for selecting and implementing effective improvement strategies, and assessing and monitoring progress toward the mission, vision, and goals.

✓Effective, research-based instructional practices aligned with national and Rhode Island standards are necessary to ensure that the diverse needs of each student are met.

✓Leaders ensure a safe environment by addressing real and potential challenges to the physical and emotional safety and security of the school community that interrupt learning and teaching.

### RIDE School Visits

✓BEP requires well-rounded curriculum for all students and curriculum would be subject to review during any type of visit.

✓Parent and student perspective would be factored in.

✓PBGR requires multiple measures of proficiency.

### NESSC Global Best Practice Tool

Self assessment tool for schools to adopt global best practices. Addresses Personalization 1.2; Academic Rigor 1.3; International Learning 1.6

*"Advantages and opportunities around you."*



## Other:

### RI Nutrition Standards:

- ✓School staff and teacher education is important to support the new nutrition requirements and support participation in school nutrition programs.
- ✓Important to connect and educate parents on the new requirements.
- ✓USDA regulations highly encourage the use of locally grown food, farm to school programs ect.

### Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs

- ✓Extent of extracurricular activities varies from school to school.
- ✓School counselor requirements are not in the rules and regulations, and access to counselors and caseloads varies from school to school.

### School Construction Regulations

- ✓Apeiron Institute grants to develop sustainable schools in RI.
- ✓EPA Tools for Schools grant would allow RIDE to hire staff to take a more proactive approach to healthy buildings.
- ✓The regulations are customized for different age groups and incorporate a systemic approach to infrastructure and utilization.
- ✓The facilities master plan is driven by the education program.
- ✓Regulations require that 75% of school spaces have a line of sight to a window.
- ✓New construction regulations build in energy efficiencies to reduce ongoing operational costs and reduce energy expenses by 60%.
- ✓School committees have asset protection programs in place.
- ✓Strong community linkages build support for building and operational expenses related to maintenance.



### What We Have Learned:

- In using the matrix to analyze our data, we confirmed that Rhode Island has policies and regulations that create a viable infrastructure to support the whole child. The major pieces of regulation we reviewed help to meet all of the minimum requirements within each of the tenets as a group. Some regulations such as the school construction regulations go beyond the current scope of the Whole Child tenets to include how the built (facility) environment can influence and support each of the tenets. In some instances, we are at the beginning point of implementing new policies and regulations.

- Compiling data in the matrix and as text serves a dual purpose. The matrix is a visual representation of how major Rhode Island education reform policies support all of the tenets of the Whole Child and, when implemented, help local schools meet the minimum requirements within each area. The text version of data illustrates how different regulations support the whole child and illuminate opportunities for collaboration. This helps educators at the state and local level who are interested in developing a Whole Child approach to recognize partners and regulations that are mutually supportive. This also creates an opportunity to reframe the conversation around education that purposefully plans to address all tenets.

- In Rhode Island, the Basic Education Program (BEP) has the broadest implications for supporting the Whole Child agenda and incorporates many of the existing state regulations related to the whole child. These regulations took effect on July 1, 2010 and offer an opportunity to expand whole child work in local communities. Additionally, the Special Education Regulations and the Pre-Kindergarten Regulations meet many tenets of the Whole Child for the special populations they are designed to serve. Finally, it is interesting to note that RIDE school site visits (Commissioner Review) cover all of the tenets of the Whole Child.

- Community conversations with “job alike” groups provide an excellent way to gather data relating to Whole Child practices in our schools. Many professionals and organizations, including local affiliates of national Whole Child partners and RI based organizations are eager for conversation and collaboration around the Whole Child. RIASCD’s community conversation with the RI Counselor Association demonstrated that these helping professionals are an important source of expertise regarding a whole child approach in schools.

- Students in urban, suburban and rural communities have a deep understanding of the necessity of a whole child approach and what it looks like in their schools. Schools are already implementing many whole child approaches, without having identified them (or focused on them) as such. Students want a voice and choices in shaping school opportunities that support the whole child across the tenets. A public campaign is necessary to build on these efforts and sustain this approach in a time of limited resources and competing agendas related to education reform.

- Fidelity of implementation is significant, as regulations generally cover minimum requirements and are open to broad interpretation. It is important for school leaders to understand and promote the current strategies in support of the Whole Child tenets. For example, digital portfolios in the Rhode Island High School Diploma System were designed to engage and challenge students. Some students do not understand the connection to their learning and feel portfolios are a waste of time. Appropriate communication to help youth (and in some cases faculty) make the detailed and explicit connections of school practice to the regulatory requirement is needed. Further, not all schools implement the regulations as they were intended. The value of continued community conversations and professional development cannot be underestimated in this process. Sharing model practices is essential in supporting local implementation and in promoting the value of a Whole Child focus on education.

- Strengthening partnerships and collaborations within the community and with families will be a key component in implementation, since whole child approaches can be resource and time intensive. Literally, the whole community will need to be involved.

- Additional work is needed to link the Whole Child agenda with the RI Department of Education Strategic Plan. This plan is currently focused on teachers and teaching to address the Federal Race to the Top criteria. Through advocacy and public relations, RIASCD and ASCD need to continue to demonstrate why the Whole Child legislative agenda is vital, while pointing out discrepancies between Whole Child and some state and federal education agendas.

- Data collection and working with multiple organizations is time consuming. The committee was surprised at the amount of time and energy it took to complete the crosswalk. It demonstrated the challenge and complexity of adopting a Whole Child approach to education.

- While the state has a strong policy infrastructure among Rhode Island State Regulations collectively, a Whole Child agenda is not evident within any one regulation. Neither the state nor local communities recognize that the implementation of the regulations collectively could support a Whole Child approach. A paradigm shift is necessary and RIASCD is strategically positioned to begin this next phase of the work.

## **Recommendations**

- Create a Whole Child Commission to guide the strategic adoption of a whole child approach in Rhode Island including the development of a common language and transparent state and local education policy across the five tenets of the Whole Child; the development of a web-based resource to link local efforts with state-wide whole child efforts which would provide evidence-based practices on whole child approaches in Rhode Island schools; and adoption of performance and evaluation measures for school success that incorporate the five tenets of the Whole Child.

- Provide professional development to help school communities embark and or build on local efforts to support the Whole Child.

- Engage in opportunities to include student and family voice in whole child approaches in schools and to inform state policy on a Whole Child approach to education.

- Develop a Rhode Island Whole Child Recognition Program.

- Broaden partnerships, especially among health and social service organizations, to coordinate services to work in the best interests of children and youth and thereby expanding the influence of the Whole Child approach in Rhode Island.



*“Using a child’s own drive to learn”*

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### **“How a Whole Child Approach Can Transform Education in Rhode Island”**

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