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Commissioner

State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
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April 4, 2025

The Honorable Scott Slater
Chair, Rhode Island House Finance Subcommittee on Education
Rhode Island State House, Room 306
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Slater,

This letter serves as a follow up to the House Finance Education Subcommittee hearing the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) engaged in on Tuesday, March 18, 2025. During the hearing, three questions were asked by Committee members. Please find RIDE's responses within this letter.

1. Chairman Slater and Representative Terri Cortvriend asked for more information about the process for reporting and verifying special education costs.

Response: RIDE distributes the High-Cost Special Education Categorical Survey to Special Education Directors requesting information from Local Education Agencies (LEAs) about their "extraordinary cost" students in order to qualify for state funding. RIDE compiles the responses and calculates the amount each LEA spends on extraordinary special education costs (costs above \$74,600 for 2026). A year-over-year comparison is made and an explanation for significant changes is requested. After review, the funds are allocated in accordance with budget amounts

2. Representative Teresa Tanzi asked for more information about achievement data and graduation rates for chronically absent students and students in the care of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families.

Response: As it pertains to achievement rates for chronically absent students, please see RIDE's [2024 Assessment presentation](#) (slides 23-32), which details the impact that chronic absenteeism has on student academic performance. More information can also be found in RIDE's data visualizations: [Attendance and Achievement](#) and [Long Term Attendance and Achievement](#). At this time RIDE does not yet have graduation rates disaggregated by chronically absent students. With respect to achievement and graduation data for students in foster care, please see the attached enclosures.

Chairman Slater

April 3, 2025

Page 2 of 4

3. Chairman Slater requested information about the Early Childhood funds transferred to the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS). The committee requested information about whether these funds had been spent and who initiated the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

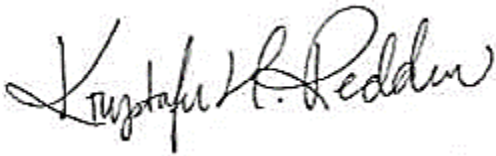
Response: RIDE and DHS work closely together across the continuum of the early childhood space. As part of the Fiscal Year 25 budget process, DHS supported RIDE's request for the expansion of Pre-K and RIDE supported the DHS request for infant and toddler supports. The work in the infant toddler space is closely tied to the success of expanding Pre-K and we believe the full system needs to be supported for our youths' long-term success. This was outlined in the expansion report as well as principles for shared governance that both agency teams value.

RIDE awarded all funds possible toward Pre-K program expansion based on the programs that submitted eligible applications. In reviewing the needs of the full continuum and discussing needs of the system with DHS, it was determined that the use of funds to support workforce educators would strengthen the system's health overall. Since the funds were in RIDE's budget, the process was initiated at RIDE.

All of the money in the MOU has been obligated in a WAGE\$ contract specifically to support infant and toddler educators and the application process is currently live and open. The funds should be fully spent by the June 30 deadline.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Krystofer Redden

Chief of Staff

Rhode Island Department of Education

Enc: RI Adjusted 4-, 5- and 6-Year Cohort Graduation Rates for 2022-23
2023-24 Assessment Results

cc: Members of Rhode Island House Committee on Finance
Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor
Christopher O'Brien, Committee Clerk
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Stanley Marczyk, Legislative Budget Analyst

RI Adjusted 4-, 5- and 6-Year Cohort Graduation Rates for 2022-23

Type	Year	Cohort	Subgroup	cohortN	gradRate4	gradRate5	gradRate6	gradRate
4YEAR	2022-23	2020	ALL	11062	84.06	0	0	84.06
4YEAR	2022-23	2020	FOSTERCARE	111	51.35	0	0	51.35
4YEAR	2022-23	2020	NFOSTERCARE	10951	84.39	0	0	84.39
5YEAR	2022-23	2019	ALL	11299	83.67	1.93	0	85.6
5YEAR	2022-23	2019	FOSTERCARE	77	40.26	10.39	0	50.65
5YEAR	2022-23	2019	NFOSTERCARE	11222	83.97	1.87	0	85.84
6YEAR	2022-23	2018	ALL	11173	83.89	2.35	0.51	86.75
6YEAR	2022-23	2018	FOSTERCARE	59	44.07	10.17	5.08	59.32
6YEAR	2022-23	2018	NFOSTERCARE	11114	84.1	2.31	0.49	86.9

2023-24 Assessment Results

AssessmentName	GroupName	2023-24 Number Tested	2023-24 Percent Tested	2023-24 Percent Not Meeting Expectations	2023-24 Percent Partially Meeting Expectations	2023-24 Percent Meeting Expectations	2023-24 Percent Exceeding Expectations	2023-24 Percent Meeting Or Exceeding Expectations
PSAT - English Language Arts/Literacy	ALL	10119	94.0	20.1	21.2	46.8	11.9	58.7
PSAT - English Language Arts/Literacy	Students in Foster Care	90	71.4	41.1	32.2	23.3	3.3	26.7
PSAT - English Language Arts/Literacy	Students not in Foster Care	10029	94.3	19.9	21.1	47.0	12.0	59.0
PSAT - Mathematics	ALL	10227	93.8	36.1	39.4	18.8	5.8	24.5
PSAT - Mathematics	Students in Foster Care	89	70.6	68.5	23.6	7.9	0.0	7.9
PSAT - Mathematics	Students not in Foster Care	10138	94.0	35.8	39.5	18.9	5.8	24.7
SAT - English Language Arts/Literacy	ALL	10071	95.8	33.6	18.6	37.3	10.5	47.8
SAT - English Language Arts/Literacy	Students in Foster Care	67	68.4	61.2	17.9	19.4	1.5	20.9
SAT - English Language Arts/Literacy	Students not in Foster Care	10004	96.0	33.4	18.6	37.5	10.5	48.0
SAT - Mathematics	ALL	10124	95.5	44.0	34.3	16.9	4.9	21.7
SAT - Mathematics	Students in Foster Care	68	68.7	70.6	23.5	5.9	0.0	5.9
SAT - Mathematics	Students not in Foster Care	10056	95.8	43.8	34.3	16.9	4.9	21.8
RICAS - English Language Arts/Literacy	ALL	57976	98.9	26.5	42.7	26.1	4.7	30.8
RICAS - English Language Arts/Literacy	Students in Foster Care	411	94.7	45.5	39.2	14.8	0.5	15.3
RICAS - English Language Arts/Literacy	Students not in Foster Care	57565	98.9	26.4	42.8	26.2	4.7	30.9