

Investing In Excellence

School Building Authority



December 2023



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

“The State of Rhode Island is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities for all public school students. School facilities provide more than a place for instruction. The physical learning environment contributes to the successful performance of educational programs.” (RIGL 16-105-1)

State of Rhode Island

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Sabina Matos, *Lt. Governor*

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Senator Dominick J. Ruggerio, *President of the Senate*

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Letter from the Governor

Dear Fellow Rhode Islanders,

As Governor for Rhode Island, I believe that one of the central responsibilities of our highest elected officials is to work tirelessly to ensure students are getting the best education possible. There is much work to be done to achieve our goal of helping our students meet and surpass Massachusetts's learning levels by 2030, but we are up to the task, and we are making historic investments in education to move our entire state education system forward.

I am more optimistic than ever and excited to work towards a brighter future for our students and our state.

What we have proposed is a tall task, given the twin challenges of longstanding learning gaps in many of our communities and a global pandemic that hit all our towns and cities. There is no time to waste. That is why we are moving on multiple fronts to support our learners, our educators, and all who work so hard to ensure our students get a high-quality education.

The centerpiece of our efforts is our Learn365RI initiative, a bold effort to expand learning beyond the traditional 180-day calendar and add 1 million hours of additional learning. But that is just the start. We have approved ambitious graduation requirements; vastly expanded career and technical education; offered high school students increased opportunities to study at the college level; and adopted a new framework to ensure multilingual learners succeed. Additionally, at

least 22 major new school projects are currently in design or under construction across the state, which will increase the number of students learning in the 21st century spaces they deserve.



I am especially proud of the work that RIDE has done to move millions of dollars in investments to improve learning environments as quickly as possible. These are exactly the kind of projects that support the efforts of local leaders to raise the bar close to home. Outdoor classrooms, 21st century equipment, ARTS programs, additional support for historically underserved communities and so much more – these are demonstrations of what we can do when we work together for our kids.

This report tells a powerful story of putting our money where our mouth is by detailing what “Investing in Excellence” really means in Rhode Island. The only way we will reach our ambitious goals is to work together at all levels, from my office through the General Assembly to RIDE to each school district and local leader. I am more optimistic than ever and excited to work towards a brighter future for our students and our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. McKee".

Daniel J. McKee

Governor



Letter from the Commissioner

Dear Rhode Island Students and Families,

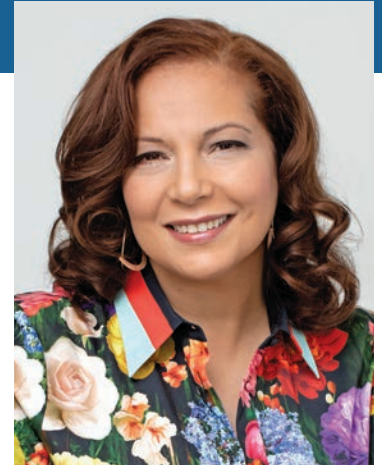
There is no greater investment we can make in the future of our state than ensuring generations to come can access and benefit from a world-class education. That is why Governor McKee and I are fully committed to making strategic decisions and long-term investments that will move our entire state education system forward and empower all students to reach their full potential.

We stand at a critical crossroads in education in the wake of a once-in-a-generation global crisis. We recognize that with challenges also come great opportunities to reshape and improve our school systems. That is why we are working relentlessly to meet the moment and ensure that no matter their zip code, all our kids are ready to succeed in the classroom, college, career and beyond.

That work takes many forms: support for educator preparation and development; high-quality curriculum and learning tools; special focus on our multilingual learners and differently abled students; 21st century learning facilities; addressing chronic absenteeism; expanding access to allow all Rhode Island students to attend free, high-quality Pre-k programs; and more. The pandemic took a toll on every facet of our lives, but as we rise as a state education system, I am committed to making sure we surpass our pre-pandemic performance. A once-in-a-generation challenge has presented us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine and empower schools to provide our kids the world-class education they deserve.

This report details much of the work of one of our most important engines for change, the School Building Authority (SBA). This office within RIDE

has risen to the challenge of prioritizing equity, embracing innovative thinking and promoting strategic investment in learning spaces that will benefit students across Rhode Island. Since 2021, RIDE, through the SBA, has ensured the investment of \$76 million in our schools and our students.



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This summer I had the honor to participate in the official launch of our student-operated food truck program. This effort, dubbed “Menu for Success,” will provide trucks for 13 districts, and these will become vibrant classrooms for a wide set of skills. Young entrepreneurs will learn business from the inside out; graphic design students will develop all the marketing materials; automotive students will get hands-on experience; and our culinary students will do what they do best, serve delicious food to their communities.

This is just one example of SBA innovation at work. Here are a few more:

- RIDE has made \$43 million in funding available for two rounds of the SBA's Facility Equity Initiative. The FEI ensures underserved school communities receive an equitable share of state school construction funding by prioritizing funds for the districts with the highest reimbursement rates and need.
- RIDE established a \$15 million 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund to help districts invest in innovative technology and equipment that fosters a STEM project-based learning approach.
- Our \$5 million Art Reengages Talent in All Students initiative – ARTS – provided every school district at least \$10,000. This grant program supported Mount Pleasant High School students who visited the nation's capital to showcase their talent to hundreds of thousands of people in the nationally televised Memorial Day parade!

These are just some examples of what we are doing as a state as we center the needs of our kids, families and educators. There is so much more to share. I invite you to read this report to see what happens when “investing in excellence” is our clear purpose and motivating spirit.

Sincerely,



Angélica Infante-Green

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education



Fully Invested

This report covers one major source of state-supported school funding: The SBA Capital Fund.

The SBA Capital Fund provides “pay-as-you-go” state funding for approved projects to address high-priority needs. This competitive funding is distributed as work is being done, with local education agencies submitting invoices to RIDE.

While not addressed in this report, there are two other important sources of state-funded school construction investments:

- **Housing Aid:** Foundational housing aid represents the state's contribution to public school construction projects. Most of this funding is based on a reimbursement model, and payment occurs when the project is complete.
- **Construction Bond:** Following up on the 2018 school construction bond, a second school construction bond was approved by voters in November 2022. Combined, the two bonds provided \$500 million in school construction funding.



Twin Challenges Spur Action

The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath presented extraordinary challenges that magnified existing inequities in school systems across the country, including here in Rhode Island. The situation was unprecedented – an unfolding health crisis spreading across school communities where longstanding learning gaps, which would on their own take years to address, persisted.

With the stakes higher than ever, Rhode Island’s leaders...have worked together to take decisive action to meet these challenges head-on through new strategic investments in modern learning environments that will not just allow students to catch up, but also leap ahead to success.

With the stakes higher than ever, Rhode Island’s leaders – including two governors, the Commissioner of Education, members of the General Assembly and the Elementary and Secondary Education Council – have worked together to take decisive action to meet these challenges head-on through new strategic investments in modern learning environments that will not just allow students to catch up, but also leap ahead to success. Together, they are ensuring that no obstacle will stand in the way of our equitable learning recovery.

With a focus on closing equity gaps and fast-tracking shovel-ready projects that deliver immediate benefits to communities, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has spent the last several years leveraging School Building Authority (SBA) Capital Fund resources to create flexible and safe learning spaces throughout the state.

FROM THE GROUND UP

Established in 2016, the SBA Capital Fund provides upfront funding for high priority school construction projects with the greatest potential impact on achievement gaps in the state’s priority areas.



Since 2021, RIDE has invested \$76 million in school facilities throughout the state to ensure high-quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island students. Since 2019, we have completed or are

working toward completion of 50 new facilities (on a per-capita basis, this would be equivalent to over 1,350 school facilities in California!).



Since 2021, RIDE has invested \$76 million in school facilities throughout the state to ensure high-quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island students.

INVESTING IN EXCELLENCE (FY 2022-2023)

Initiative	Investment
Facility Equity Initiative	\$43 million
21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund	\$15.1 million
Learning Inside Out	\$7.5 million
ARTS Initiative	\$5 million
WELL Initiative	\$4.3 million
Menu for Success	\$1.6 million
TOTAL	\$76 million

The family of innovative investments features the 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund, which provides innovative technology and equipment to support STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and CTE (career technology education), and a new Facility Equity Initiative (FEI) that delivers focused support for communities in the greatest need.

In addition, RIDE has launched the Wellness in Education Leads to Learning (WELL) program, which benefits students and educators through

the development and expansion of school wellness spaces; the Learning Inside Out program, which invests in outdoor learning spaces that foster emotional well-being and improved academic outcomes; a \$5 million program to support art education across the state; and a groundbreaking student-run food truck initiative that provides real world experience and entrepreneurship skills in a booming segment of our state’s economy.

EXCELLENCE IS OUR NORTH STAR

We appreciate the commitment of leaders at all levels of government and our school communities who are working together to ensure an equitable learning recovery by making strategic investments and supporting student wellness. Through difficult times, we are rising to the challenge and working together to create the best school facilities and learning environments that give every student the opportunity they need to flourish.

Our shared commitment is deep and our vision is steadfast. What follows are early reports on the fruits of these ambitious investments, which are already pointing the way toward excellence for our students, our communities and our state. ★



Re-Balancing the Equation: Facility Equity Initiative

It's no secret; Rhode Island's future depends on how well today's students are prepared to succeed and contribute to the state's future. But in too many communities for too many years, there has been a wide gap between what students need and what they receive – a challenge that the pandemic exposed and exacerbated.

But thanks to the commitment of leaders at all levels, a new Facility Equity Initiative (FEI) began closing the gap by providing \$13 million in FY 2022 alone. The initiative continues in FY 2023 with \$30 million in funding to expand eligibility to the ten qualifying LEAs – with reimbursement rates to offset local spending exceeding 45%. These communities enroll most of the state's free and reduced lunch students, multilingual learners and differently abled students.

by most students at each school. The resources will allow LEAs to fund projects that otherwise would not advance or would require struggling communities to take on high-interest bonds.

NORTH PROVIDENCE

New Media Center a "Crown Jewel"

In North Providence, \$2.8 million in FEI funds supported the newly remodeled North Providence High School auditorium, which now serves as



The focus of this initiative is to provide transformative 21st-century learning spaces to students in these communities.

The focus of this initiative is to provide transformative 21st-century learning spaces to students in these communities. Preference is given to community spaces (i.e., library, media center, science labs, cafeteria, auditorium) that are used

the performing arts center for schools across the district. The new facility is utilized by the district's high school, middle and elementary schools to showcase musical and drama productions for the entire community. In addition, the auditorium serves as a central venue for parent informational nights, academic ceremonies and awards nights, student and parent athletic orientations, and more.

“We are grateful to the SBA for this important investment in North Providence and allowing the school district to greatly enhance an aging facility and transform it into a modernized, state-of-the-art performance center,” said **North Providence Superintendent Joseph B. Goho**. “The newly renovated auditorium will be a crown jewel facility that will improve academic and co-curricular outcomes and also serve as the venue for a myriad of community events fostering pride in our students.”

The FEI has helped Coventry implement much-needed upgrades to its high school gym and auditorium, which have not had substantial improvements since the school was built in the 1970s.

COVENTRY

Building Pride, Promoting Science

The FEI has helped Coventry implement much-needed upgrades to its high school gym and auditorium, which have not had substantial improvements since the school was built in the 1970s. Utilizing \$3.1 million in grant funding, Coventry has been able to improve science labs to benefit students at all levels, including those enrolled in AP science courses that require modern science labs to provide the required instruction.

The district is finding new ways to leverage the funds to advance its strategic goals of restoring pride in their schools and learning spaces and building stronger community partnerships.

“The students and residents of Coventry deserve school facilities that they can be proud of,” said **Don Cowart, Superintendent of Coventry Public Schools**. “I hope that the impact of these projects will show the community the importance of updated facilities and that students are inspired to achieve their goals. These modern spaces will showcase what updated facilities can do for a school and a community.”



PAWTUCKET

Equitable Access to Modern Learning

Pawtucket, which has received \$7.1 million in FEI funding, has utilized this funding stream to invest in multiple projects, including the renovation of the Curvin-McCabe Elementary School Media Center, which provides students with equitable access to a large, modern venue to collaborate on projects that advance their educational journeys. The upgraded facility also provides faculty with

professional learning and community collaboration opportunities and supports the broader community by providing a new state-of-the-art meeting space.

“This new media space allows our students to have equitable access to state-of-the-art furnishings, books, tools and media that will impact their educational career and support high educational outcomes.” – **Pawtucket Superintendent Patricia Royal.**

WEST WARWICK

Student Voices, Student Choices

Utilizing \$1 million in FEI funding, West Warwick is investing in updated classroom configurations that promote collaboration and student-directed learning. These investments advance the district’s strategic goals by providing all students with access

to multiple and varied educational opportunities in new learning environments that meet or exceed industry standards.

By aligning physical resources to support learned success, West Warwick’s initiative allows for flexibility, creativity, student voice and student choice that benefit learners and teachers alike.

“It has provided us with a chance to serve our students in new and different ways,” says grade 5 teacher leader **Kristin Petraraa**, who serves as co-chair of the committee to support the initiative.

Across Rhode Island, the robust investments provided by the SBA’s Facility Equity Initiative are transforming outdated facilities into 21st-century learning spaces that benefit students, teachers, families and entire communities. While there is

much work to do, this initiative is yielding substantial results in the effort to build a more equitable educational system that provides every student with the opportunity to reach their full potential. ★



Across Rhode Island, the robust investments provided by the SBA’s Facility Equity Initiative are transforming outdated facilities into 21st-century learning spaces that benefit students, teachers, families and entire communities.



Menu for Success: Food Truck Initiative

Rhode Island’s food industry, which accounted for 75,000 jobs and \$4.2 billion in sales in FY 2020, is a rich and growing segment of our state’s economy. There are ample opportunities for qualified workers to find their place in this vibrant sector, but they need education and inspiration to get started.

Island’s 14,000 restaurants are owned by people of color. Through industry exposure, RIDE’s Menu for Success initiative aims to open doors for students of color and increase the number of students who graduate with a defined plan for continued success.

For just over \$1.5 million from the SBA Capital Fund, RIDE is providing interested school districts with food trucks and associated supports while serving up a multitude of benefits (and delicious food) to Rhode Island communities. For students hungry to learn, the food trucks are on their way.



RIDE’s new student-run food truck initiative – which is launching in 13 districts in the 2023-24 school year – is a unique approach that can bridge the gap for restaurateurs of the future.

RIDE’s new student-run food truck initiative – which is launching in 13 districts in the 2023-24 school year – is a unique approach that can bridge the gap for restaurateurs of the future. From culinary arts and entrepreneurship to accounting and automotive repair, this exciting program will equip students with the real-world skills and experience they need to taste success.

While Rhode Island’s food sector accounts for tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in sales annually, Rhode Island lags far behind in creating opportunities for Latinos and other people of color to own and operate restaurants. Only 2% of Rhode

The Menu for Success initiative will benefit communities at large by providing internship and job opportunities, concessions at games and work sites, presence at community events, fundraising and community service opportunities and more.

“The job skills that students will learn through this program, like automotive repair, the culinary arts and entrepreneurship, are evergreen paths to good-paying jobs,” said **Lieutenant Governor**

Sabina Matos. “These food trucks are a major opportunity do more than teach our students. It’s a chance to truly engage them and make them excited about their coursework.”



the lead in every aspect of the venture and honing valuable skills in the process.

“When you think of the incredible cross-curricular possibilities of a food truck serving as a mobile classroom, the sky’s the limit,” said **Lincoln Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Filippelli.**

The Mane Event will no doubt add value (and spice) to the Lincoln community, serving a variety of menu items at school- and community-centered events, including football games and field trips. Profits will help fund the programs it serves.

What could be tastier than a friendly competition that will showcase hometown pride and delicious food – a true menu for success!

LINCOLN

The Sky’s the Limit

Utilizing its \$125,000 SBA “Menu for Success” grant, Lincoln is one of the first districts in the state to dive in and launch a student-run food truck, dubbed *The Mane Event*. Lincoln has served as a leader throughout the “Menu for Success” journey and looks forward to bringing the Rhode Island community together through a shared appreciation for food, entrepreneurship and student success.

From the outset, school leaders understood the food truck enterprise presented a special opportunity to advance the district’s strategic goal of equipping students of color with the skills and experience they will need to run their own businesses. From designing the menu and preparing food to keeping the books and maintaining the truck itself, students are taking

“When you see this truck, it is literally a mobile restaurant. It has everything you could imagine in it,” added Filippelli at a recent unveiling of the district’s food truck. “Watching this venture take off with students getting true-to-life experience is really something to see.”

CENTRAL FALLS

Opening New Doors of Opportunity

Central Falls, which does not currently have a culinary program, is making the most of “Menu for Success” and the new opportunities it offers students.

State and local leaders recently joined administrators, educators and students in Central Falls to celebrate the launch of the new student-

operated food truck dubbed *A Taste of Central Falls*, which served up delicious, artisan sandwiches made with local ingredients alongside *The Mane Event*.

“We’ve learned a lot about creating a menu, developing a business and preparing food safely. I think this will definitely help me in the future when I open a business,” offered one excited Central Falls student.

The district also offered a Food Truck Entrepreneurship course in the summer and fall of 2023 to students statewide through RIDE’s free, high-quality All Course Network.

Central Falls, which does not currently have a culinary program, is making the most of “Menu for Success” and the new opportunities it offers students.

“Central Falls Schools are excited for this innovative opportunity to have our students learn entrepreneurship, financial literacy and of course culinary skills as well,” said **Central Falls Superintendent Dr. Stephanie Downey Toledo**. “We do not yet have a culinary program and are so grateful for this creative way to develop opportunities for our students that previously couldn’t exist. We are thrilled to be a part of this!”

“The new Central Falls Food Truck is such an exciting opportunity for our school district to not only give our students a creative outlet for learning, but also provide amazing career training that

opens doors that weren’t always accessible,” said **Central Falls Mayor Maria Rivera**. “Thank you RIDE for helping our future graduates realize they can achieve success as entrepreneurs that embrace their cultures, boost creative potential, add to our booming culinary industry or thrive in other career paths inspired through this Menu for Success Initiative.”



Students from across the state are looking forward to competing in Rhode Island’s first ever “Student Food Truck Roundup” in the spring, when sample foods made by teams of student culinary entrepreneurs will compete for the Governor’s Cup (best savory dish) and Commissioner’s Championship Belt (best sweet dish).

What could be tastier than a friendly competition that will showcase hometown pride and delicious food – a true menu for success! ★



RIDE's School Building Authority Is Delivering for Communities Across the State.

50

NEW SCHOOL FACILITIES

Since 2019, RI districts have completed or are working toward completion of approximately 50 facilities throughout the state. *On a per-capita basis, this is equivalent to over 1,350 school facilities in California!*



\$76

MILLION

Since 2021, RIDE's SBA Capital Fund has invested \$76 million in school facilities throughout the state to ensure high-quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island students.

\$48

MILLION

RIDE's SBA Capital Fund has invested \$48 million in Facility Equity Funding (FY 22-23) and Equity Boosts to provide transformative 21st-century learning spaces in Rhode Island's neediest districts.

6,500

PROVIDENCE STUDENTS

In Providence alone, the SBA's 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund will provide 6,500 students with new media centers.



70

SCHOOLS WITH NEW OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

RIDE has provided \$7.5 million in SBA Capital Funds to meet the ambitious goal of creating an outdoor classroom at 70 schools in Rhode Island by August 2024.



28,000

JOB &

\$2.9







BILLION IN APPROVALS

Since FY 2018, RIDE has approved almost \$3 billion in transformative school construction projects throughout the state, which has created thousands of construction jobs.



Investing in Excellence: A Statewide Commitment

LEGEND: SBA COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

-  21st Century Technology and Equipment
-  Facility Equity Initiative
-  Learning Inside Out
-  Menu for Success
-  Wellness in Education Leads to Learning (WELL)
-  ARTS Initiative







Capital Fund Grants — FY 2022 & 2023

LEA	21st Century Technology and Equipment	Facility Equity Initiative	Learning Inside Out	Menu for Success	Wellness in Education Leads to Learning (WELL)	ARTS Initiative	TOTAL
Achievement First	●					●	\$226,272
Barrington	●				●	●	\$436,588
Beacon Arts	●		●		●	●	\$129,027
Blackstone Academy	●				●	●	\$120,252
Blackstone Valley Prep	●					●	\$223,270
Bristol-Warren	●				●	●	\$387,260
Burrillville	●	●	●		●	●	\$692,013
Central Falls	●	●	●	●	●	●	\$8,906,466
Charette	●				●	●	\$53,136
Chariho	●		●	●	●	●	\$812,416
Compass School	●		●		●	●	\$203,147
Coventry	●	●		●	●	●	\$4,008,320
Cranston	●	●		●	●	●	\$3,381,775
Cumberland	●				●	●	\$629,373
Davies Career and Tech	●			●	●	●	\$372,313
East Greenwich	●		●		●	●	\$554,014
East Providence	●	●	●	●	●	●	\$3,300,004
Excel Academy	●				●		\$79,501
Exeter-West Greenwich	●		●		●	●	\$420,274
Foster	●		●		●	●	\$227,845
Foster-Glocester	●		●		●	●	\$538,721
Glocester	●		●		●	●	\$215,461
Greene School	●		●			●	\$235,000
Highlander	●		●			●	\$163,895
Hope Academy	●				●	●	\$39,707
International Charter	●		●			●	\$138,006
Jamestown	●		●		●	●	\$217,375
Johnston	●				●	●	\$406,417
Kingston Hill	●		●			●	\$135,000
Learning Community	●		●		●	●	\$243,998
Lincoln	●		●	●	●	●	\$634,777

LEA	21st Century Technology and Equipment	Facility Equity Initiative	Learning Inside Out	Menu for Success	Wellness in Education Leads to Learning (WELL)	ARTS Initiative	TOTAL
Little Compton	●				●	●	\$120,426
Met Career & Tech	●					●	\$84,917
Middletown	●				●	●	\$233,855
Narragansett	●				●	●	\$213,726
New England Laborers	●				●	●	\$117,354
New Shoreham	●		●			●	\$135,000
Newport	●		●	●	●	●	\$614,909
North Kingstown	●		●		●	●	\$647,326
North Providence	●	●			●	●	\$3,271,809
North Smithfield	●				●	●	\$256,789
Nuestro Mundo	●				●	●	\$122,975
Paul Cuffee	●				●	●	\$171,431
Pawtucket	●	●	●	●	●	●	\$9,110,066
Portsmouth	●		●		●	●	\$326,467
Providence	●	●	●	●	●	●	\$21,029,472
PVD Prep	●					●	\$35,000
RI Nurses Institute	●				●	●	\$45,287
RI School for the Deaf	●					●	\$35,000
RISE Prep	●					●	\$39,559
Scituate	●				●	●	\$210,933
Segue	●		●		●	●	\$262,864
Sheila Skip Nowell Academy	●				●	●	\$128,550
Smithfield	●		●		●	●	\$473,362
South Kingstown	●		●			●	\$561,078
Southside Charter	●					●	\$35,000
Times2	●				●	●	\$108,994
Tiverton	●				●	●	\$265,933
Trinity Academy	●					●	\$35,000
Village Green	●					●	\$35,000
Warwick	●		●	●	●	●	\$1,919,153
West Warwick	●	●	●		●	●	\$1,964,290
Westerly	●			●	●	●	\$459,658
Woonsocket	●	●		●	●	●	\$4,851,791
YouthBuild					●		\$36,755
TOTAL	\$15,125,000	\$43,546,831	\$7,004,769	\$1,625,000	\$4,289,746	\$4,500,000	\$76,091,346



The research is clear: teachers report better student behavior, improved social interactions and fewer disciplinary issues when learning takes place outdoors. That is why RIDE has made a commitment to support outdoor classrooms through SBA’s “Learning Inside Out” initiative – an innovative approach that promises to improve both student wellness and academic results.

To advance this effort, RIDE has provided \$7.5 million in SBA Capital Funds to meet the ambitious goal of creating an outdoor classroom at 70 schools (25% of all schools) in Rhode Island by August 2024.

Outdoor education is a powerful tool that all schools can use to deliver for their students.

WARWICK

Harnessing the Power of Outdoor Learning

Warwick is utilizing a \$700,000 SBA “Learning Inside Out” grant to invest in outdoor learning in seven of the district’s schools – spaces that will provide excellent environments for art lessons, learning about nature and science, physical education activities and more.



Warwick’s initiatives include outdoor classrooms that incorporate elements of habitat restoration to support local wildlife.

Learning outside...

- Improves student morale and builds a sense of community
- Connects students to nature
- Teaches respect for the environment
- Creates tranquil spaces that improve learning and creativity

Warwick’s initiatives include outdoor classrooms that incorporate elements of habitat restoration to support local wildlife. This includes the creation of a rain garden, which will provide a unique opportunity for students to advance their scientific knowledge while learning about the importance of protecting and preserving local ecosystems.

A new “Wyman in the Wild” outdoor space will include a walking path, native plant pollinator gardens and learning space at Wyman Elementary.

Norwood Elementary will develop sensory gardens and create a walking path. Greenwood Elementary plans to turn its existing courtyard space into varied gardens and seating spaces appropriate for learning and teaching. Cedar Hill and Hoxsie Elementary will build an amphitheater with seating, garden areas and walking paths – and they will also partner with a wildlife association.

House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi. “Our school system is one of many reasons Warwick is such a great place for families to live, and with 39 miles of coastline, our community has very diverse natural habitats and is ideal for students to be learning about the environment around them.”

A new “Wyman in the Wild” outdoor space will include a walking path, native plant pollinator gardens and learning space at Wyman Elementary.



“Warwick is excited to be part of this innovative opportunity,” said **Warwick Superintendent Lynn Dambruch.** “This initiative gives students an opportunity to experience learning beyond the four walls of a classroom. Learning in an outdoor environment will encourage students to explore, wonder and experience inquiry-based learning. It will foster curiosity in a motivational and natural environment.”

“I am thrilled that seven Warwick schools will receive funding through the Learning Inside Out initiative, which is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our teachers and staff,” said

FOSTER-GLOCESTER

Promoting Wellness & Career Readiness through Sustainable Agriculture

In Foster-Glocester, a \$300,000 SBA “Learning Inside Out” grant is supporting Ponaganset High School’s Agriculture Sustainability Project, which will transform an existing

space into an interdisciplinary, outdoor learning environment. The new space will give students the ability to expand their interests and appreciation for their natural surroundings while fostering career readiness opportunities and enhancing social-emotional development.

This project will have three primary components: connecting existing, separate CTE programs to promote true interdisciplinary experiential learning; improving accessibility for all students and community members; and linking the space with the community to foster a greater sense of stewardship. These newly-integrated learning

environments will also promote student inclusion, emotional wellness and established school-wide values – all while serving members of the community.

“These investments will grow the physical space that we have for students through the creation of an outdoor learning environment that will increase opportunities for unique hands-on learning,” said **Foster-Glocester Superintendent**

Dr. Renee Palazzo. “More importantly, it will make these experiences available to more students by providing a safe and accessible space.” ★



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The Future is Now: 21st Century Facilities

RIDE launched the 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund in 2022 with a \$15 million investment. The fund provides local education agencies (LEAs) innovative technology, furniture and equipment to support science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) project-based learning, as well as career and technical education (CTE). These are the key disciplines that will fuel job and economic growth in Rhode Island and the nation for decades to come.

This funding is ensuring that learning spaces for students across Rhode Island are equipped with the modern amenities needed to prepare them for future success. The fund leverages \$1 million in existing CTE categorical funding (Program Equipment Fund) along with \$14 million in SBA Capital

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Funds to provide learning supports that deliver an immediate transformative effect for thousands of Rhode Island students.

To take down barriers and meet the needs of all learners, the distribution uses a new 'Equity Boost' tool to provide additional funding to the least

affluent communities. Additionally, the SBA has since FY 2019 been providing technical assistance grants to LEAs to help them apply for the funds and conduct due diligence and planning to create high quality, safe and healthy learning environments.

"I was proud to support this state investment, which means that students across the state will have flexible learning spaces that foster productive educational environments," said **President of the Senate Dominick J. Ruggerio**.



"To truly transform and improve teaching and learning, we must continue to invest in our school facilities," **Commissioner Infante-Green** said in announcing the fund. "Through the 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund, we are promoting creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration in our classrooms. We are proud this strategic initiative is centered on equity and will serve as a catalyst to accelerate learning across Rhode Island."

PROVIDENCE

Taking it to the Next Level

In Providence, the 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund has provided \$3.8 million, which is supporting, among other initiatives, a transformative media center initiative that will provide 6,500 Providence students with modern learning environments.

The investment has transformed the traditional school library by doing away with outdated wooden desks and adding new technology and features, including video conferencing facilities and a collaborative makers space that supports creative learning.

The new media center at Young Woods Elementary School, for example, is now the heart of the school. The investment has transformed the traditional school library by doing away with outdated wooden desks and adding new technology and features, including video conferencing facilities and a collaborative makers space that supports creative learning.

New books and e-subscriptions provide current, modern-day information and curricula for students and equip library media specialists to serve as both educators and resource support for staff members. The media center is also utilized as a gathering space for staff professional development, school-based functions and community events.



“PPSD is investing in 21st century learning environments for our Providence Students,” said **Dr. Javier Montañez, Superintendent of Providence Public Schools**. “We are extremely proud of this project, which collaborated with many district staff members and community partners, to positively impact 6,500 PPSD students. We are providing opportunities that expand beyond the traditional four walls of a classroom by creating spaces which reinforce imagination and take the traditional library to the next level.”

CRANSTON

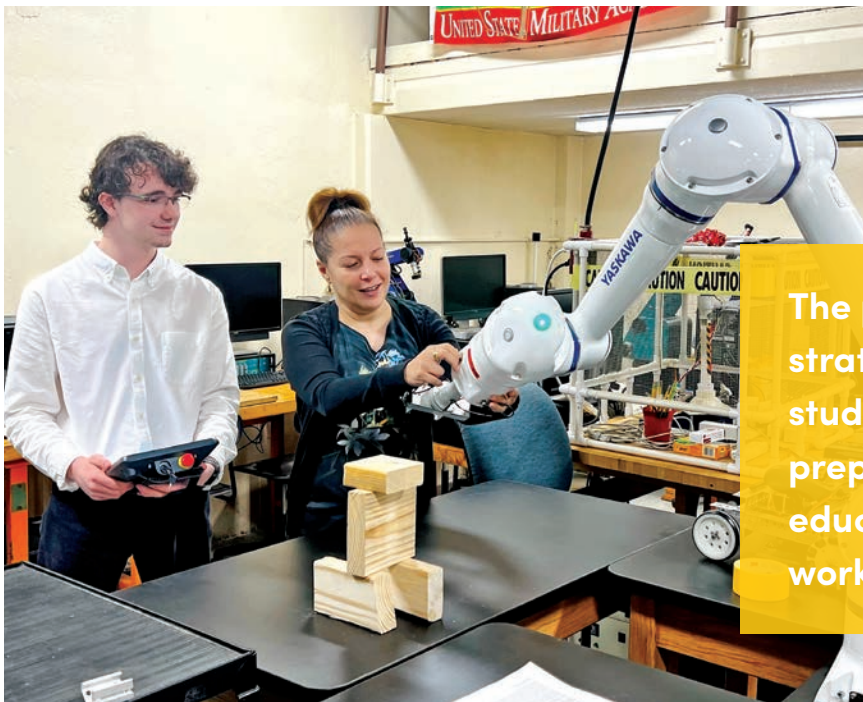
Preparing Students for the Modern Workplace

In Cranston, an \$847,485 technology fund investment is supporting much-needed renovations to the Cranston Area Career and Technical Center (CACTC) and new cafeteria furniture at Cranston East and West. The upgrades include newer facilities for a multitude of purposes, including meeting spaces for student restaurant nights, culinary exhibitions and art exhibitions.

recently became the first high school student in New England to receive industry certification from Yaskawa, the producers of the Motoman.

“In Cranston, we aren’t just constructing new buildings, we are changing how education is delivered to children by building 21st-century spaces where contemporary skills are fostered,” said **Jeannine Nota-Masse, Superintendent of the Cranston Public Schools**. “Our staff ensures that even our older spaces provide our students with access to technology and healthy, comfortable

spaces. The grant money from RIDE is making a real impact on our schools – in a large district with 30 buildings to care for, support for our facilities inside and out is appreciated!” ★



The project advances the district’s strategic goal of equipping students with 21st-century skills to prepare them for post-secondary education and the modern workplace.

The project advances the district’s strategic goal of equipping students with 21st-century skills to prepare them for post-secondary education and the modern workplace. Utilizing RIDE’s 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund, Cranston Public Schools purchased a Motoman HC 10 DTP collaborative robot and a Tormach 770M CNC machining center. Cranston and all of Rhode Island are proud that CACTC student Logan D’Arezzo



Putting the Arts in the Picture: ARTS Initiative

Research demonstrates that the link between involvement in the arts and engagement in school is strong and persistent. As part of our larger efforts to re-connect students with their schools and communities, RIDE launched an innovative, \$5 million program to support art education across the state.

Under the ARTS Initiative, grants are used to purchase items such as musical instruments, art supplies and audio/visual or culinary equipment. They can also be used to create murals, add art installations, support performing arts or even sponsor an artist in residence. Funding is based on student enrollment. Each district or charter school has received a grant of at least \$10,000 to support the arts in their schools as they see fit.

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THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (RISD)

Pride and Inspiration

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf (RISD) is utilizing \$10,000 in funding it received through the ARTS grant program to advance the school's mission of ensuring that all Rhode Island children who are deaf and hard of hearing become literate, independent and productive citizens who set and achieve life goals.

The grant enabled RISD to organize several Deaf cultural events with student participation, offering learners an inspiring window into the possibilities their futures may hold. This included a performance



by the Urban Jazz Company, a group of three dancers (two Deaf and one hearing), who demonstrated the

beauty of expression through dance and the power of movement. RISD also invited world-famous Deaf mime James Jones, whose silent storytelling and creativity captured students from the moment he walked on stage.

With the grant money, RISD was also able to expand seating capacity, enabling them to open these events to family, friends and the larger Deaf community.

“On behalf of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, we wish to extend our sincere gratitude for this ARTS grant funding,” said **RISD Assistant Director Amy Vincenzi**. “An important aspect of our mission is developing a strong sense of pride in our

To nurture exceptional talent and support equal opportunities, the ARTS Initiative supports individual sponsorships for Chariho students who demonstrate exceptional skills and passion in the arts.

students’ identities as Deaf individuals who can achieve anything. It is always a thrill when the presenter is able to speak to our students in their first language: American Sign Language.”

CHARIHO

Building Confidence and Nurturing Talent

In Chariho, \$102,582 in ARTS Initiative grant funding has promoted high-quality arts education through the procurement of state-of-the-art sound systems, lighting equipment and stage enhancements that offer students professional-level settings to showcase their talents. Grants also supported the procurement of musical instruments, in-residence programs with embedded professional development, audio and visual equipment, auditorium upgrades and other enhancements that optimize the utilization of learning spaces.

To nurture exceptional talent and support equal opportunities, the ARTS Initiative supports individual sponsorships for Chariho students who demonstrate exceptional skills and passion in the arts. These sponsorships include scholarships, mentorship programs and financial assistance for specialized training.

The program also provides in-residence programs in which professional artists and performers collaborate with students over extended periods,



providing hands-on experience that allows students to gain insights into artistic processes, explore various art forms and develop their creative skills.

“The ARTS initiative provided invaluable opportunities for our students in the arts and humanities. New and updated equipment allows students to explore a variety of mediums and approaches to creating. Professional display boards and auditorium accessories elevated the

presentation of student work to our community and beyond. We are so grateful for the investment in the arts!" - **Stacy Wilbur, Fine Arts Department Chair at Chariho Regional High School.**



"This is such an amazing program for Chariho kids and really enhances their school experience, builds confidence and improves academics and

attendance," one **Chariho Parent** commented. "So much is expected of children academically that we forget sometimes that they absolutely need outlets like the arts for their growth, development and overall well-being."

The ARTS Initiative also provides professional development opportunities for Chariho arts teachers, equipping them with knowledge and skills to effectively engage students in arts education. Workshops, seminars and training sessions were organized to enhance teaching methodologies and promote interdisciplinary learning.

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For Act 2 of the ARTS Initiative, RIDE will leverage at least \$500,000 to further support the arts in schools during the 2023-2024 school year. As is said in the theater, the show must go on! ★



The WELL Initiative: Prioritizing Emotional Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted not only student achievement, but also emotional well-being, two measures that are closely linked. The implication is clear: to support academic achievement, it is essential to support emotional health.

RIDE's Wellness in Education Leads to Learning (WELL) Initiative supports students and educators through the development and expansion of school wellness spaces, which provide quiet areas to decompress, promote self-care and foster a sense of community and support. This approach improves student mental health and promises to have a direct impact on academic outcomes.

The initiative comes as education systems nationwide reimagine education and school facilities to meet the holistic needs of students in the wake of the pandemic. Under the WELL initiative, LEAs are eligible for up to \$150,000 in funding (depending on enrollment.)

The WELL initiative allows LEAs to select from several pre-approved products to facilitate the development of wellness rooms and/or build capacity in existing spaces. Products include "Nook Pods," grassy benches and floor-level learning spaces, among others.

"Every child deserves to attend a 21st century learning environment that not only supports a comprehensive educational experience but also supports the social, emotional, mental and behavioral health needs of students," said **Governor Dan McKee**. "We look forward to the positive impact the W.E.L.L. Initiative will have for students and teachers across Rhode Island."



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EAST PROVIDENCE

Reinventing Learning Environments

East Providence is using the WELL initiative to reinvent learning spaces to support the holistic needs of students throughout the district. The new funding will advance East Providence's strategic goal of promoting social-emotional learning skills, which are vital to academic success.



The addition of flexible seating, for example, will allow schools to establish calming areas that support students' emotional well-being while facilitating new opportunities for constructive peer interactions and academic instruction.

"The East Providence School Department is grateful for the opportunity to rethink and redesign learning and meeting spaces for students," said **Dr. Sandra J. Forand, Superintendent of East Providence Schools**. "Principals, deans and support personnel are excited about the potential for enhanced learning environments that meet the needs of students. We believe the addition of these furniture pieces will create wellness spaces that will make our schools and classrooms more visually pleasing and inviting for children."

NEWPORT

Learning Well = Living Well

Newport is using the WELL initiative for new wellness spaces designed to increase student success by helping them become adaptable lifelong learners with the coping skills to calm themselves and more fully access the curriculum.

For example, Pell Elementary School's strategic plan promotes self-regulation and career-ready skills, while reducing disruptions and distractions for all. By providing quiet spaces for students to decompress, the WELL initiative funding will help Pell educators teach better coping skills, which will improve self-care for all students.

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"We believe in an inclusive learning environment for all students. If you want to live well, you need to learn well – and we strive to teach all students to live well," explained **Traci Westman, Principal at Pell Elementary School**.

RIDE recognizes that supporting the mental and emotional health of students and educators not only promotes a greater sense of community, but also improves academic outcomes. By providing new resources for these wellness spaces and many more across the state, the WELL initiative is transforming schools into healing spaces. ★



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education