



2018 Rhode Island Reads Advocacy Agenda

Rhode Island Reads: The Campaign for 3rd Grade Reading is a joint initiative of United Way of Rhode Island and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. Our goal is to double the number of third graders reading on grade-level by 2025 by working to: improve school readiness, reduce summer reading loss, reduce chronic absenteeism in school, and help children learn to read.

School Readiness

- Support the Governor's FY19 Budget Proposal to increase funding for **State Pre-K** by \$1.1 million.
- Support the Governor's FY19 Budget Proposal to add \$1.5 million to the Child Care Assistance Program to **promote higher quality child care for infants and toddlers** by establishing tiered quality rates (Article 15).
- Promote passage of H-7148 and S-2120 to **improve the quality of child care for all age groups of children** by establishing a tiered quality rate structure for the Child Care Assistance Program, with increased rates for all child care providers serving low-income families and larger increases for higher quality programs.
- Support the Governor's Proposal to **establish a pilot program** for low-income parents attending college or post-secondary education to receive a child care subsidy (\$200,000).
- Allocate resources to sustain and improve the Rhode Island **Early Childhood and Education Data System (ECEDS)** (\$300,000).
- Invest state resources and secure a Medicaid match to fund **proven family home visiting programs** (Early Head Start, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership or Parents as Teachers) that provide parenting support to vulnerable families with young children.
- Support passage of the Early Childhood Innovation Act (H-7152) to establish a DHS-managed competitive grant pool to fund research-based initiatives to **promote learning and development of infants and toddlers**.
- **Improve the state's paid family leave program** to increase the number of weeks available to bond with and care for a new child and to ensure low-wage workers receive adequate wage replacement to be able to take time off when they have a baby.

Summer Learning

- Promote passage of H-7148 and S-2120 to **improve the quality of afterschool and summer programs**, by establishing a tiered quality rate structure for the Child Care Assistance Program.
- Promote passage of H-7413 and S-2347 establishing a permanent joint **legislative commission on Out-of-School Time Learning**
- Protect federal funding for **21st Century Community Learning Centers**.

Chronic Absence

- Promote passage of H-7040 that would require school districts to adopt **evidence-based approaches to reducing chronic absence** in the early grades (K-3).

Learning to Read

- Support the Governor's FY19 budget proposal to allocate \$100,000 in the state budget to support **high-quality curriculum** implementation in kindergarten and the early grades.
- Implement a statewide **Kindergarten Entry Profile** to provide information to teachers and policymakers about children's early learning and development.
- Support K-3 dual language education** by promoting passage of H-7436 and S-2506 which would establish and provide funding for dual language education to promote bilingualism and biliteracy.
- Support passage of legislation and funding so the Rhode Island Department of Education can provide adequate professional development opportunities so K-3 teachers and reading specialists can **identify and provide evidence-based interventions for students with dyslexia**.
- Support the Governor's FY19 budget proposal and bond initiative for school construction and renovation to **ensure PK-Grade 3 students have high-quality learning spaces**.

Urgency for Closing Achievement Gaps in Third Grade Reading

As of 2017, 40% of RI third graders met expectations in reading, however wide achievement gaps exist by income and by race and ethnicity as shown in the table below. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race for Results* report, released in October, 2017 shows that Latino children in RI are doing worst in the nation on the report's opportunity index which includes reading proficiency.

**Third Graders Meeting Expectations on the PARCC
English Language Arts Assessment, Rhode Island, 2015-2017**

SUBGROUP	2015	2016	2017	% CHANGE 2015-2017*
Male Students	33%	35%	35%	+3%
Female Students	43%	45%	45%	+3%
English Learners	8%	13%	12%	+3%
Non-English Learners	40%	43%	44%	+3%
Students with Disabilities	11%	10%	16%	+5%
Students without Disabilities	42%	44%	45%	+3%
Low-Income Students	21%	25%	25%	+4%
Higher-Income Students	53%	56%	57%	+4%
White Students	48%	49%	50%	+3%
Asian Students	48%	49%	54%	+6%
Black Students	22%	26%	27%	+6%
Hispanic Students	18%	24%	24%	+6%
Native American Students	17%	15%	16%	-1%
ALL STUDENTS	37%	40%	40%	+3%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*, 2015-2017. Low-income status is determined by eligibility for the free or reduced-price lunch program.

*Change calculations may reflect rounding.