City of Providence
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 110
Approved February 28, 2025

WHEREAS, The Providence Public School District has been under state control since 2019, a period that has brought significant challenges for the City of Providence in navigating its financial responsibilities and striving to improve educational outcomes for its students; and

WHEREAS, The Providence Public School District could return to local control as early as July of 2025, underscoring the need for the city to develop strategic approaches and leverage available tools to address systemic issues and support meaningful reforms; and

WHEREAS, While external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and internal setbacks have further complicated progress, the City of Providence remains focused on implementing comprehensive solutions that will create the conditions necessary for a successful return to local control of the Providence Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, From October 2023 to May 2024, a member of the Providence City Council and a representative of the Mayor's office served on the Special Senate Commission to review and provide recommendations for professional and labor-management standards that offer school-based flexibility and accountability for employees of the Providence Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, The recommendations outlined in the report of this commission are not a singular solution but are designed to create workable and positive conditions that will help the Providence Public School District prepare for a successful transition back to local governance; and

WHEREAS, The commission's report highlights the critical role of collaborative collective bargaining and capacity-building initiatives, including investments in principal training programs, teacher-led professional development, and labor-management collaboration facilitators, in fostering an environment of professional unionism and educational quality; and

WHEREAS, The Council supports the recommendations found in the commission's final report as they pertain to state legislation, including the recommendation that the Rhode Island General Assembly pass legislation codifying a state constitutional right to education; and

WHEREAS, The Special Senate Commission explored models that provide schools with increased autonomy and flexibility in decision-making, tailored to the unique needs of their students and communities; and

WHEREAS, Springfield, Massachusetts, a city of similar size and demographics as Providence, serves as a strong example of this approach, having successfully implemented it through Empower Schools, demonstrating measurable improvements in student achievement local leadership, innovation, and targeted support; and

WHEREAS, A letter of support for the commission's report was submitted and added to the public record, signed by the City Council President, the Mayor, and the President of the Providence School Board, signifying united support from the city.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council hereby expresses its full support for the recommendations put forth by the Special Senate Commission for Providence Public Schools, including meaningful exploration of establishing customized organizational models in the city of Providence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council specifically commends the leadership of the Commission Chair, Senator Sam Zurier, a former City Councilor, a former Providence Public School Board member, and a proud parent of Providence Public School graduates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council urges all relevant stakeholders to work collaboratively to implement these recommendations, recognizing the critical importance of ensuring high-quality education for all students and fostering a supportive and empowering environment for educators; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the offices of the Honorable Mayor Brett Smiley, Governor Daniel McKee, Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi, Senate President Dominick Ruggerio, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Angélica Infante-Green, Superintendent of Providence Public School District Dr. Javier Montañez, and to all those who served on the State Senate Special Commission.

IN CITY COUNCIL
FEB 20 2025
READ AND PASSED

RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

Mayor

Date: 2/28/2025

Senate Study Commission Report on Improving Providence Schools

About the Commission

Membership

Charge

Who Testified

Commission Members

Senator Samuel D. Zurier – *Chair*

Senator Meghan Kallman – *Senate Appointee*

Senator Jessica de la Cruz – *Senate Appointee*

Zachary Scott – *Providence Public Schools*

Lisa Odom-Villella – *RI Dept. of Education*

Thomas Kerr-Vanderslice – *City of Providence*

Erlin Rogel – *Providence Public School Board*

Wobberson Torchon – *Principal, Mt. Pleasant High School*

Jeremy Sencer – *RI Federation of Teachers*

Nirva LaFortune – *PPSD Parent*

Marcus Tremblay – *Student, Classical High School*

Susan Lusi – *Ex Officio Member*

Steve Smith – *Ex Officio Member*

The Commission's Charge & Its Importance

- Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law; and
- Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and great school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.

This is important because high quality educators, working together, create powerful student learning.

People Who Testified (in order of appearance)

Jo Anderson Jr. – *Founder, Consortium for Educational Change*

Heather Peske – *President, National Council on Teacher Quality*

Nancy Mullen – *Retired Principal (Providence and Massachusetts)*

Paul Reville – *Founding Director, Harvard University Education Redesign Lab*

Evan Stone – *Co-Founder, Educators for Excellence*

John Papay – *Director, Brown University Annenberg Institute for School Reform*

Peter McWalters – *Former Commissioner, RI Department of Education*

Andres Alonso – *Former Harvard University Professor of Practice and CEO of Baltimore Public Schools*

Saul Rubinstein – *Director, Rutgers University Collaborative School Leadership Initiative*

Overview

Vision for Providence Schools
- Today's Reality

Shared accountability
- What it is
- Why it's important for teachers & kids

Commission's recommendations

The Vision: Shared Accountability

- Excellent education for every student
- Schools that attract and retain high quality, diverse teachers and other educators
- Educators who work together to educate students well
- Teachers have meaningful participation in decision-making
- Teachers are responsible for maintaining high standards within the profession

Shared Accountability is Crucial for Kids

Teachers working together improves student learning

- Share best practices and data
- Offer informed insights
- Learning from one another

Every teacher needs to be good; but research shows that good teachers, working together, help students learn even more

How do we get there in Providence?

Commission Recommendations

1. Negotiate a teachers' contract that requires shared accountability
2. Provide support and training
3. Amend state law to remove legislative barriers
4. Hold administrators accountable for collaborative decision-making

A Very Different Teachers' Contract – Look For:

- Decision-making at the school level and an approach to putting it in place, e.g., teacher leadership teams
- School-level accountability for continuous improvement – developing and acting on a plan in each school
- School-level control of professional development
- Differentiated teacher responsibilities and resulting compensation
- Shared accountability for supporting teachers who aren't performing and dismissing those who don't improve after support with expedited dismissal

A Promising Example – The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership

Contract Highlights:

- Joint commitment to collaboration
- School based shared decision-making through teacher leadership teams
- Streamlined dispute resolution and due process
- Best qualified staff chosen from internal and external candidates
- Reduced emphasis on seniority in teacher assignment and lay-offs
- Career ladder

A Promising Example – The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership

Results:

- +160% school leaders of color and +54% teachers of color over 5 years
- +40% high school graduation rate 2017-21
- In 2020-21:
  - 9 of 12 schools decreased suspensions
  - 10 of 12 increased attendance
  - 10 of 12 decreased chronic absenteeism
- 69% of parents wouldn't change their student's school
- 96% of teachers ratified most recent contract

Support and Training

- Collaboration and best practice
- Collaborative dispute resolution
- Time for planning, collaboration and professional development
- Time for working with families and community

Amend State Law

Law	In order to:
Constitutional Amendment	Create legally enforceable right to education
RIGL 16-13-6 (specific to Providence)	Base teacher lay-offs on criteria in addition to seniority
RIGL 16-13-4 (specific to Providence)	Expedite due process when union and management agree performance is unacceptable
RIGL 16-7-29 (specific to Providence)	Allow negotiation of a career ladder that rewards teachers for taking on additional responsibilities
RIGL 16-7.1-5 (Crowley Act)	Permit State to require action if changes aren't made through negotiations

Hold Administrators Accountable for Collaborative Decision-Making

- Provide training and mentoring in collaborative decision-making for building and district administrators
- Prioritize collaborative skills and behaviors in administrator evaluations
- Prioritize supporting site-based management in district administrator evaluations

Today's System Does Not Serve All Students

The system was never set up to serve all kids. It has very, very, reliably serviced about 30% - no matter what we do - and about 40% get through it - and about 30% don't do very well. And [that percentage rises to] 50% if you're [in] a targeted population. And that is not a new number. . . We've been doing that consistently, and we are still doing that.

Peter McWalters, Former Commissioner of Rhode Island

Every adult in Rhode Island owes it to Providence students to change this.

Questions?

Thank you!

Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 6, 2024

Senator Samuel D. Zurier
Senate Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St
Providence RI, 02903

Dear Chairman Zurier and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Office of Mayor Brett P. Smiley, Providence City Council and Providence School Board commend the efforts of Chairman Zurier and the Special Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of the Providence Public Schools for their efforts drafting and editing this report.

The report provides a detailed account of national best practices concerning labor-management relations, professional standards, school-based flexibility and educator accountability, as well as recommendations for how Providence and Rhode Island can adopt these practices to support a school district that better serves Providence students. We recommend that all members vote for the passage of the Commission's report.

The central recommendation of the report is for stakeholders to work collectively to improve our educational system as Providence recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 and continues to operate under state intervention. Empowering educators who have dedicated their careers to teaching and mentoring students in Providence is central to these findings. We support the report's recommendations to best support these educators, including the adoption of teacher and management leadership teams at schools, increased school autonomy, peer assistance and review, and development of a career ladder. These steps will help Providence attract and retain education professionals who are committed to providing all children with a high-quality public education.

The report also affirms that to support a professional educator workforce, leadership must create a collaborative atmosphere and environment where teachers feel empowered and respected. Together, district and school-based administrators must work as partners with teachers to create effective school teams, improve student learning outcomes and promote teachers' professional growth and mastery. We must also recognize and remove the barriers that exist for young

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educators and particularly educators of color to thrive in this field in order to build a workforce that reflects the lived experiences of Providence's diverse student body.

The in-depth review of the Springfield Empowerment Zone (SEZ) within the report provides a case study for Providence to emulate when considering how to build a sustainable foundation for improving Providence Public Schools. The SEZ offers a successful model of school-based management and holding schools accountable for results. The SEZ includes a collective bargaining agreement that includes a career ladder with incentives for leadership, recognizes exceptional performance by teachers and streamlines reassignment for teachers and staff who have been displaced. We feel a great sense of urgency to deliver high-quality public schools for thousands of students in Providence and believe that school-based autonomy and accountability is necessary for rapid improvement.

We commend Chairman Zurier for his engaged and thoughtful leadership on this Special Legislative Commission. This report is the culmination of in-depth research and expert testimony from educators, researchers and education policy experts, and provides a pathway that is aspirational but achievable on how Providence stakeholders may work together to collectively improve our educational system. Investments in better labor and management for teachers will lead to evident progress on student outcomes and goals outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan, and we respectfully ask the commission to vote for passage of this report.

Sincerely,

Mayor Brett P. Smiley
City of Providence

Council President Rachel Miller
Providence City Council

President Erlin Rogel
Providence School Board

Special Senate Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of Providence Public Schools

Report

Submitted to the
Rhode Island State Senate
May 2024

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SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Members

Senator Samuel D. Zurier

Chair

Senator Meghan Kallman

Senate Appointee

Senator Jessica de la Cruz

Senate Appointee

Zachary Scott

Deputy Superintendent of Operations – Providence Public Schools

Lisa Odom-Villella

Dep. Commissioner of Instructional Programs - RIDE

Thomas Kerr-Vanderslice

City of Providence

Erlin Rogel

President – Providence Public School Board

Wobberson Torchon

Principal – Mt. Pleasant High School

Jeremy Sencer

RI Federation of Teachers

Nirva LaFortune

PPSD - Parent

Marcus Tremblay

Junior – Classical High School

Susan Lusi

Ex Officio Member

Steve Smith

Ex Officio Member

The Honorable Dominick J. Ruggerio
President of the Rhode Island Senate
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear President Ruggerio:

At this time, we are pleased to submit this report of the Special Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools. Our report represents combined input from Commission members and those who presented before the Commission to share their expertise on labor-management standards, school-based flexibility, and accountability for the employees of the Providence Public Schools.

This report encompasses the discussions and presentations that began September 2023 and ended May 2024. This report provides different perspectives of the complex balance of specific needs and abilities. All information provided considers the positive and negative effect upon the parties in these relationships. The recommendations are meant to provide a clear thought process to all interested groups regarding potential steps and discussion for future agreements.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the commission for the time they took to participate and for their valuable insight.

Respectfully,

Senator Samuel D. Zurier
Chairman of the Special Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools
District 3
Providence

Executive Summary

As charged by the Senate, this Commission's Report provides findings and recommendations to address labor-management issues within the Providence Public Schools, including professional standards, school-based flexibility and accountability for employees of the Providence Public Schools. Those findings and recommendations fit within a labor-management framework of shared accountability.[1]

In a shared accountability work environment, teachers become professional partners with voice in the content and delivery of teaching and learning. This would replace the current framework of labor-management relations, negotiations and interactions are largely limited to wages, hours and basic working conditions.[2] When properly designed and implemented, a shared accountability program can attract and retain high quality educational professionals who are committed to providing all children with a high-quality public education.

The Report describes best practices in other school districts that have adopted elements of shared accountability, including (1) teacher and management leadership teams at the school and district level, (2) site-based management, (3) peer assistance and review and (4) development of a career ladder.

The Report describes how other school districts have made the successful transition to shared accountability, through collaboration developed over time. The Report also describes how other districts have established a set of "rules of the road" to support and encourage the

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1 Shared accountability "develops wide areas of joint operations. It defines education as a collective enterprise." Kerchner and Caufman, "Lurching toward Professionalism: The Saga of Teacher Unionism", *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (1995). This concept is discussed in greater detail at p. 5 below.

2 *See* n.1.

collaboration needed, including examples of transitions occurring through a State takeover of a school district.

The Report contains recommendations for building capacity for shared accountability in Providence, and recommendations for legislation that can remove current barriers to this transition.

While acknowledging that a transition to shared accountability is not sufficient by itself to address all of the challenges facing the Providence Public Schools, the Report makes the case that its findings and recommendations are necessary to meaningful and sustainable progress.

Introduction

At Providence high school graduation ceremonies each Spring, students, families and educators celebrate the conclusion of their elementary and secondary education. Many of these Providence high school graduates go on to receive a quality college education on their way to a successful career. In order to reach the graduation stage, these successful students often owe a debt of gratitude to their skillful and dedicated Providence teachers, hundreds of whom provide their students with a high-quality public education in hundreds of classrooms every day of the school year.

While graduations can be a time to celebrate, we do not measure the quality of public education exclusively by the stories of those who succeed. Peter McWalters described the current public education system as one that serves 30% of the students "no matter what we do," while another 40% of the students "get through it." In his view, the traditional system's design ensures that the remaining 30% of the students "don't do very well," a figure that increases to 50% of students in disadvantaged populations.

One can debate the precision of these percentages, but it is indisputable that our public schools have the mission to provide a quality public education to every student, and Providence Public Schools do not fulfill that mission for thousands of students every year. For these underserved students, the success of some of their peers provides no comfort. Instead, the inadequate public education we provide these children becomes a devastating setback for their futures, a source of professional frustration for their teachers, a basic failure of our State to safeguard these children's civil rights and basic needs, and an ugly stain on our social fabric. The persistence of these calamities over decades[3] (even after accounting for the progress we have achieved) does not reduce the seriousness of either the severe challenges a new generation of students must overcome each succeeding year, or the urgency of bringing a definitive end to this ongoing and compounding tragedy; instead, the opposite is true.

When the Department of Education issued its Decision and Order taking control over Providence Public Schools in 2019, it clearly articulated this urgent need. Providence Public Schools developed a five-year turnaround action plan, stating comprehensive goals for that period. With the advent of the COVID pandemic, those goals were extended by two years due to these unforeseen circumstances. It is still not clear when these goals will be met.

The Senate formed a study commission to review these essential components of a successful public-school program: (1) professional standards and the labor-management relationship; (2) school-based flexibility and (3) accountability for the district's professional

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[3] In 1991, the Public Education Fund and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce sponsored the Providence Blueprint for Education, or PROBE Commission. That Commission conducted an 18-month investigation that included stakeholder discussions, public meetings and expert presentations. The 1993 PROBE Commission's report can be viewed at https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED365762.pdf. The challenges Providence Public Schools faced 30 years ago as documented in the PROBE Report overlap significantly with those documented in this Report. Only a small number of its recommendations were implemented. Others, such as school-based management (p. 64), peer assistance and review (p. 71) and teacher-designed school-based development (p. 74) were not implemented, but remain vital elements of reform contained in this Report.

educators. The Commission received public comment about conditions in Providence today, and expert presentations about best practices nationally.

The experts presented a consistent message that the traditional structure of labor-management relations in Providence does not match the needs of either the students currently receiving an inadequate education in Providence or the professional educators who entered the teaching profession to serve those students, but who are held back from doing so. In contrast, the best practice in school districts is to move to a shared accountability relationship in which:

- Teacher- district relations go beyond negotiated policy to negotiated shared responsibility as the basis of school district operations.
- Teaching is transformed from an individualized, private practice to a more collective and public professional practice informed by professional learning communities;
- Labor and management create shared decision-making structures at the district and school levels that promote partnerships between unions and districts to transform systems into learning organizations that work to continuously improve student learning;
- The union gains a stronger role as a vehicle for transforming teaching into a profession that will improve learning for all students within schools by ensuring strong teacher voice in decision making and holding teachers accountable to the highest professional standards.

These practices alone are not sufficient to bring Providence Public Schools to the promised land of quality public education for all. The majority of students enrolled in the Providence Public Schools lack the privileges and advantages other students can take for granted. In Providence, many students live in poverty (making it a Title I district), or in single-parent families, or in families where English is not the primary language spoken. Also, there is currently a national shortage of teachers, and Providence Public Schools are not an exception to

this trend.[4] While acknowledging these limits, shared accountability represents a valuable and likely essential component of the successful future of Providence Public Schools.

A shared accountability relationship will also support greater school-based flexibility, as decisions on how best to educate students will be made by educators in the building, guided by an ongoing review of data on learning and other outcomes, paired with knowledge of best practices.

Shared accountability offers the dual promise of improved learning for students and greater professional fulfillment for teachers, who can achieve more completely the ideals that inspired them to devote their career to public education. The Commission heard descriptions of urban schools and districts that have successfully implemented elements of this transformation in such places as Toledo, Baltimore, Lawrence, Massachusetts and Springfield, Massachusetts. The Commission also learned that the current Providence labor-management relationship, as embodied in the collective bargaining agreement, contains elements of these best practices; however, the pace of progress will not serve the needs of generations of deserving children.

As a result, Providence Public Schools face the challenge of achieving the transition to shared accountability with necessary and appropriate urgency. The experts presented examples where teachers and administrators achieved a successful transition in a compact amount of time. The Commission believes the closest district-level analogue may be the Springfield Empowerment Zone, where the teachers union agreed, in a contract reached through collective bargaining, to almost all of the major labor-management reforms that the experts said that Providence desperately needs.

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4 Commissioner Sencer and President Calabro attribute some of Providence's teacher turnover to problematic management practices. As explained below, the Commission's recommendations include requirements of administrative accountability.

Some Commissioners noted that Providence had undertaken promising initiatives before, only to discontinue them due to financial constraints and/or the loss of mutual trust and wish to collaborate. In the Commission's view, the Springfield Empowerment Zone contract (and the record of success that has resulted) provide a useful example of labor-management collaboration for the good of students. While both sides would need to relinquish certain powers to achieve this result, the Commission believes this can be facilitated with expert assistance, and would enhance the teaching profession in the best interest of the children of Providence.

This Report presents findings describing the components of national best practices in labor-management relations, professional standards, school-based flexibility and accountability. It also presents recommendations for legislation and other measures to help Providence Public Schools achieve these best practices in the most urgent manner possible.

To conclude, the Commission recognizes and appreciates the many important contributions that educators have made, and continue to make in our current labor-management system to the education of the children of Providence. With that said, the limits of the current system are clear, and a transition to the best practices of shared accountability is essential to address the urgent needs of many students enrolled in Providence Public Schools. The Commission believes this transition can and must take place on an urgent basis, and this Report provides alternative paths to attain this goal.

I. Background

A. The Genesis of This Commission

In October, 2019, the Department of Education issued a Decision Establishing Control Over The Providence Public School District and Reconstituting Providence Public Schools. Acting at the request of Providence officials the Department exercised its authority under the

Crowley Act, R.I.G.L. §16-7.1-5 to develop and implement strategies for schools and school districts "that continue to fall short of performance goals outlined in district strategic plans." For these schools and districts, the Crowley Act authorizes the Department to exercise "progressive levels of control . . . over the school and/or district budget, program, and/or personnel," up to reconstitution if necessary. The Decision explained the need for the State takeover in this way:

> The reasons for this lack of improvement are multi-faceted and indicate that the issues that underlay the district's lack of improvement are structural in nature and cannot be solved by simply further increasing state effort and support of the current system, which the state has done for more than a decade to no avail. . . . The time has come for the State to exercise control over the budget, program and personnel of PPSD and its schools and, if further needed, to reconstitute the schools by restructuring their governance, budget, program, and personnel and making decisions regarding their continued operation.

The Department attached to the Decision an Order of Control and Reconstitution, authorizing the appointment of a State Turnaround Superintendent and the development of a Turnaround Plan to be implemented for an initial term of five years.

The Turnaround Action Plan (TAP) that followed set forth Five Promises, the second of which is that "Every school will be staffed and led by supported, empowered educators." The TAP also presented a series of goals and benchmarks to assess the progress of the takeover in such areas as student achievement, student and teacher attendance, graduation rate, and climate and culture, as well as some related to this Commission's charge such as:

- Increase percentage of educators of color in the total educator workforce;
- Increase percentage of principals who demonstrate proficiency;
- Increase percentage of funding available for school-based decision making;
- Increase percentage of fully staffed classrooms at the beginning of the year.

The arrival of the pandemic in 2020 disrupted the progress of public education everywhere, and Providence Public Schools has amended the TAP from time to time to provide

for more "realistic" annual goals. With that said, even after accounting for external conditions, Providence Public Schools have not achieved progress to address the needs identified at the start of the takeover with sufficient urgency. With regard to empowering educators, the Commission received testimony from Patrick Shelton, a teacher who expressed disappointment with the School Department's micromanagement of his classroom presentations, providing what he described as minute-by-minute prescriptions of how he was required to teach his students.

While the success of public education anywhere depends upon the interaction of factors both within and outside the direct control of a school district, the issues of labor management relations and professional educator standards are within the control of the district's educators. They form a crucial component of any school's success, as reflected in the above-quoted Promise set forth in the TAP. With that in mind, the Senate approved Resolution S-1131 in June, 2023 establishing a study commission to:

- Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law; and

- Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and great school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.

The Resolution called for the formation of a 15-member study commission comprised of educators, members of the public and elected officials to investigate these issues and present a report to the Senate with findings and recommendations. The Commission met three times to hear public comment. All Commissioners were asked to suggest experts to advise the Commission, and all of the experts proposed by Commissioners presented at three meetings. The Commission then met nine more times to discuss the issues and comment upon drafts of this Report.

B. Necessary Restraint and Humility

The Commission acknowledges the significant limitations of its project. As noted, the success of Providence Public Schools depends on many factors outside of the scope of the Commission, such as curriculum, student and teacher attendance, supports for social and emotional learning and well-being, and the challenges many Providence children face outside classroom. For these reasons, improvements in labor-management relations, professional standards and accountability and site management are not a sufficient solution to the challenges facing Providence Public Schools; however, the Commission believes that they represent a necessary element of that solution which, unlike many others, is eminently within the control of educators.

Also, as many experts testified, successful labor-management collaboration cannot be imposed by legislative mandate. Collaboration depends upon a relationship of mutual respect and trust, described by Commissioner Sencer as the need for "adaptive change" to support any "technical change."[5] As a teacher demonstration at a recent meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education demonstrated, the current labor-management relationship in Providence Public Schools is far from perfect.[6] With that said, the Commission believes that targeted legislation can provide a framework establishing basic "rules of the road" to support a framework of collaboration grounded in professional standards and the best interests of children.

The Report that follows describes the elements of labor-management relations, professional standards, school-based flexibility and educator accountability that amount to best

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5 *See* Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, "A Survival Guide for Leaders", from the Harvard Business Review, viewable at https://www.u-cursos.cl/ingenieria/2011/2/IN7A3/1/material_docente/bajar?id_material=376127

6 *See, e.g.,* "PPSD Teachers Struggle to be Heard by the RI Board of Education", *The Providence Eye,* February 7, 2024, viewable at https://pvdeye.org/ppsd-teachers-struggle-to-be-heard-by-the-ri-board-of-education/.

practices nationally. The Report then describes a vision for a brighter future in Providence Public Schools based on those best practices, and approaches to achieving that vision in an effective and timely manner. Based on these findings, the Report then presents a set of recommendations for actions by the General Assembly and Providence Public Schools (which are now under State control) to advance that vision.

II. Issues to Address

The Commission heard public comment and expert testimony related to the four principal elements of its charge, namely (A) labor-management relations, (B) professional standards, (C) school-based flexibility and (D) accountability for Providence Public Schools Department employees. As will be explained, school districts can combine the best practices in these four elements to create a system of shared accountability in which all of the adults collaborate to work in the best interests of the children whom they serve. The Report will discuss each of these elements in turn.

A. Labor-management relations

1. Shared Accountability

Jo Anderson, Jr. of the Collaborative Leadership Consulting Group, whose prior career included service as the Executive Director of the Illinois branch of the National Education Association and as an advisor to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, presented his vision of the evolution of teacher unionism. Through an article he shared with the Commission[7] and his presentation at a Commission hearing, Mr. Anderson described the movement's origin in a traditional model that limited the scope of collective bargaining to "bread and butter, and security

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7 Anderson, Jo, Leading, Organizing and Engaging Members through a Comprehensive Teachers Union, Schools, vol. 20, No. 2 (Fall 2023), viewable at https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/PPS/SitePages/hmaterials.aspx

issues such as fair treatment and just cause." This model confined teacher voice in education policy decision making, depriving teachers of career fulfillment and students of much of teachers' professional knowledge and skill.

As a union leader, Mr. Anderson organized his colleagues to move from "adversarial" negotiations to the "organizing of labor-management collaboration for the purposes of transforming how districts function." To achieve this end, some school districts used "interest-based bargaining"[8] to identify common goals, resulting in contracts such as the Glenview Constitution, which created shared decision-making structures at the school and district levels to articulate a partnership among the school board, the administration and the teachers' union.

Mr. Anderson sketched a vision of an emerging pedagogy that engages students actively in their learning to think critically, supported by a transformation of the way teaching is organized from individuals in the classroom to communities of practice, all brought about through collaborative redesign by teacher unions and management to empower the teaching and learning process.

Mr. Anderson identified site-based management (in which authority and responsibility is moved from the district level to the school level) as a critical element of this transformation. He offered the Springfield Empowerment Zone in Massachusetts[9] as an example of labor-management collaboration that assigns district leadership (both labor and management) the responsibility of capacity building and maintaining a level playing field, while holding all

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8 In his book *Getting to Yes,* Roger Fisher developed the strategy of interest-based bargaining containing four essential features: (1) Separating people and issues, (2) Focus on interests, (3) Generating options and (4) Use objective criteria. *See* https://www.beyondintractability.org/bksum/fisher-getting. The Illinois Federation of Teachers presented a paper to the American Federation of Teachers describing "How to Negotiate and Interest-based Contract," viewable at https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/media/2014/if_iftreport.pdf

9 Described below at pp. 28-30.

schools accountable for results. In the paper he submitted to the Commission,[10] Mr. Anderson also described how shared accountability practices can support the progress towards a "comprehensive union" that incorporates social justice ideals for the good of the children and their families served by educational professionals.[11]

As noted above, Patrick Shelton, a Providence elementary school teacher, provided testimony confirming teachers' desire to have voice in classroom instruction. He noted his frustration with the minute-by-minute scripts that central administration provides him to teach subjects, inability of teachers to help design and best use common planning time.

2. Collaboration Structures

The Commission also learned about the benefits of teacher-management collaboration from Professor Saul Rubenstein, Director of the Center for the Study of Collaboration in Work and Society at Rutgers University. Through the Center's Program for Collaborative School Reform and his independent research, Professor Rubenstein has compiled data correlating stronger labor-management collaboration in schools to improved student outcomes through, among other factors, greater teacher job satisfaction and retention.[12] The Rutgers program brings teachers and management together to share best practices of collaboration in such areas as mentoring, pedagogy and curriculum through the operation of labor-management leadership teams at the school and district level. In his view, the state can support the development of

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10 *See* n. 7, pp. 19-20.

11 Mr. Anderson describes the Rockford Education Association as an example of a union "on this journey of becoming a Comprehensive Teachers Union" which combines shared and distributed leadership systems, strategic planning and execution, member relationships, partners and processes to define the work and data and information systems to monitor and track progress and results.

12 *See* Professor Rubenstein's presentation, viewable at https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/PPS/commdocs/Rubinstein%20Testimony%20RI%20Senate%2011-14-23.pdf

collaboration by providing resources, facilitators and training in building collaboration structures and through interest-based bargaining.

3. Teacher Preferences

Evan Stone, co-founder of Educators for Excellence, presented his findings concerning best practices and teacher preferences based on the organization's review of more than 100 teacher contracts and survey data from more than 40,000 teachers. He identified school-based flexibility as a major mechanism to promote collaboration, recommending that site-based management be made the default in school districts, as opposed to something schools can opt into. Mr. Stone cited with approval the Springfield Empowerment Zone collective bargaining agreement as a notable example of this reform. He identified open bargaining sessions as a possible tool for collaboration, and noted that collaboration was achieved in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Mr. Stone also presented survey findings of teacher preferences that promote professionalism. Those preferences included:

- Differentiated compensation for teachers who work in hard-to-staff schools and subjects, and for teachers who achieve multiple outstanding evaluations;
- Providing teachers with more time to collaborate with other teachers through team teaching and mentoring;
- High quality professional development[13];
- School-based flexibility, site-based team teaching and different class sizes where appropriate;
- Basing layoffs on performance rather than seniority (preferred by a 2:1 margin);

[13] The Educators for Excellence survey did not provide a specific definition of the term "high quality professional development. *See* https://e4e.org/sites/default/files/voices_from_the_classroom_2023.pdf, slide 109. Surveyed teachers identified subject areas of professional development they considered most important to add to their existing program, naming collaboration with other school staff, supporting unique learners and restorative justice as top priorities. *See id.*, slide 75.

(Mr. Stone noted that Rhode Island's seniority-based layoff statute is one of only fourteen remaining on the books across the country.)

- Paid planning time at the start of the school year.

The survey data supports the conclusion that teachers want a professional environment with a career ladder that rewards a willingness to accept additional responsibility and professional skill. According to the survey data, teachers of color consistently identify career development as critical for attracting and retaining teachers of color.[14] By creating a "career ladder" that contains these elements, Providence Public Schools can become a more attractive destination for teachers entering the job market, and for teachers in harder-to-fill positions. In these ways, a career ladder may help Providence Public Schools gain additional tools to succeed in the face of a national teacher shortage.

B. Professional Standards

Heather Peske is the President of the National Council on Teacher Quality, whose mission is to "to ensure every child has effective teachers and every teacher has the opportunity to be effective." The Council has compiled a national database of state laws and policies, teacher contracts and school board policies from which it has developed recommendations based upon national best practices.

Dr. Peske presented the Council's findings in the areas of collaboration and teacher quality. The Council found that contracts and policies could advance teaching quality through

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[14] In the 2022 "Voices from the Classroom: Deep Dive, BIPOC Teachers" survey (viewable at https://e4e.org/sites/default/files/voices_deep_dive_bipoc_final.pdf), the top response from educators of color on what would attract them to the profession was "Leadership Pathways." When asked what would help keep educators in the classroom, 41% of teachers of color responded with "More leadership opportunities while continuing to teach," compared to 8% of overall responses. In Providence Public Schools, approximately 22% of the district's teachers identify as persons of color. As a result of overall demographics and recent hiring efforts, 34% of the Providence teachers hired in the last four years identify as persons of color.

shared decision-making in such areas as curriculum materials, professional development, increased diversity, common planning time, strategic staffing, and the addition of support staff. In the area of teacher compensation, the Council found that state laws such as Rhode Island's, which mandate a "lock step" salary schedule[15] do not promote teacher retention, and that paying teachers more for master's degrees did not lead to greater teacher effectiveness. Instead, she recommended that school districts repurpose the funds used for advanced degree bonuses to use instead as pay enhancements for those working in hard-to-teach subjects. Also, Dr. Peske described public bargaining as a mixed blessing, as in some settings it could lead to posturing for external audiences.

C. School Based Flexibility

Nancy Mullen, after serving in Providence as Principal at Mount Pleasant and Hope High Schools, continued her career at the Kuss Middle School in Fall River, Massachusetts. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts staged an intervention at Kuss because of its status as the state's lowest-performing school. During her tenure, the school went from "worst to first," a development she credited to her teachers, as well as the school's special site-based flexibility policies.

Through the State intervention, the school was provided with extra support staff (including a Redesign Coach and a Wellness Coordinator) and the flexibility to provide teachers with extra pay to support a longer school day. Kuss also revised the schedule to incorporate double block periods, which reduced the number of students per day that each teacher taught

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15 The Council's research reveals that Rhode Island is one of only fourteen states with such a mandate. Nine of these states' laws include language expressly permitting adjustments to compensation based on performance, but Rhode Island is one of five states which is silent on this issue. In contrast, according to the Council, Massachusetts law is silent on lockstep compensation, but encourages pay based on performance. *See* https://www.nctq.org/publications/State-of-the-States-2022:-Teacher-Compensation-Strategies.

from 125 to 75. As principal, Ms. Mullen had full responsibility for staffing, including reduced documentation for the non-renewal of probationary teachers.[16] The school's policies concerning all of these matters were resolved at the school level between the principal and the teachers without the oversight or other involvement of district level or State-level labor or management officials.

Peter McWalters served as Rhode Island's Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education during 1992-2009. In 2005, he invoked the authority of the Crowley Act to reconstitute Hope High School.[17] The reconstitution order required all teachers there to choose between signing a commitment to a new set of professional expectations including peer review, a non-traditional schedule, accepting teaching assignments based on student need, participating in the school improvement team and many other commitments to benefit students, or else leaving the school. Commissioner McWalters appointed Nicholas Donohue to serve as Special Master. Mr. Donohue and the Hope High School teachers collaborated in the shared project of improving student outcomes. Under the reconstitution order, half of the teachers left, but those who remained embraced the changes with enthusiasm. The State contributed additional funds to support this effort, but unfortunately the initiative faded away after the supplemental State funding ran out.[18]

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16 Rhode Island's substantive legal standard for non-renewal of probationary teachers provides districts with significant discretion; however, Commission members described how the State's cumbersome procedural regime has added cost and delay to this process that cannot be attributed to administrative incompetence.

17 *See* Decision of Order and Reconstitution (February 4, 2005), viewable at http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2005/0012-05-Hope_High_School_Order_of_Reconstitution_020405.pdf

18 Mr. Shelton's previously cited testimony also highlighted the ways in which "top down" administrative directives can frustrate teachers' initiative and constrain their ability to gain professional fulfillment and provide the best education they can to our children.

D. Accountability

In his paper describing professional unionization, Mr. Anderson offers two foundations for shared accountability. The first comes from "A Nation Prepared," a 1986 Carnegie Foundation report that stated:

> Unions, boards, and school administrators need to work out a new accommodation based on exchanging professional level salaries and a professional environment, on the one hand, for the acceptance of professional standards of excellence and the willingness to be held fully accountable for the results of one's work, on the other.

He finds a second foundation in site-based schools, in which they have "control over staff, budget and program including curriculum with accountability for results," providing the opportunities for innovation claimed by charter schools while retaining students within the public school district.

John Papay, Associate Professor of Education and Economics at Brown University and Director of the Annenberg Institute, explained the benefits of peer assistance and review, where teacher mentors provide support to their colleagues to promote professional standards. When those efforts are not successful, the mentor recommends to management that the teacher in question is not suited for the position. When Steve Smith as Providence Teachers Union President and Susan Lusi as Providence Public Schools Superintendent attempted to make greater use of this innovation. Their efforts were frustrated by the extended procedural "due process" that the teachers' union invoked, due to legislative requirements, even after their peers had engaged in suitable, but unsuccessful support efforts. In their view (and in the view of the other experts who presented), school resources can be wasted on excessive rounds of due process,[19] especially when that teacher's peers have concluded that the teacher in question is

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[19] A recent Superior Court decision, *James Viner v. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education,* PC 2021-02565 (April 5, 2024) offers an example of the extent of due process under current Rhode Island law. The case describes how a high school student complained that her chemistry teacher engaged in a form of

unable to meet professional standards. Mr. Papay identified robust peer assistance and review combined with expedited due process as a best practice.[20]

III. A Vision for Providence Public Schools

A. Defining the Goal

From the public testimony and the expert presentations, the Commission learned how shared accountability can combine a more fulfilling professional climate for teachers with an education program that is better designed to provide a quality public education to all of the children of Providence. Such a vision for a brighter future would contain the following elements:

- Providence Public Schools will provide a work environment that will attract and retain high quality educational professionals.
- All educators within Providence Public Schools have a shared commitment to provide all children with a quality public education.
- All educators have a meaningful voice and collaborative role in fulfilling their shared commitment.
- Teachers have a responsibility to maintain high professional standards, and they have the authority and responsibility to support their colleagues in meeting them.
- All educators are personally accountable for the quality of their contribution to this shared commitment.

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sexual harassment at the end of the 2014-15 school year. After an investigation (revealing alleged incidents involving other students), the School Committee voted in August, 2015 to suspend and ultimately terminate the teacher. The teacher did not accept this result, instead invoking the full extent of his due process rights under Rhode Island law. The legal journey continued through a second School Committee hearing, an appeal to a hearing officer, a review by the Commissioner, a second review by the Commissioner, an appeal to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and an appeal to the Superior Court, which was decided in April, 2024, more than eight years after the termination proceedings began. The Superior Court upheld the termination of the teacher. For a copy of the Superior Court decision, *see* https://www.courts.ri.gov/Courts/SuperiorCourt/SuperiorDecisions/21-02565.pdf It is not clear at this time whether the teacher will take an appeal to the Supreme Court.

20 Successful collaboration requires accountability for all educators, not just teachers. *See* pp. 21-23 below.

The Commission believes that both the administration and the faculty in Providence Public Schools share this aspirational vision. Providence faces significant challenges, however, in finding a sustainable path to implement this vision.

B. Implementation

1. Providence Teachers Union's Prior Efforts

During the course of the hearings, President Calabro noted that Providence had begun to implement many of the suggested "best practice" reforms presented at the Commission hearings (with such valuable reforms as robust peer assistance and review and the Hope High School redesign), but had failed to sustain them due to lack of funding. She also described elements in the current Providence contract that she believes represent progress to shared accountability. Those efforts are worthy of recognition for the time they lasted; however, it was not possible to sustain them under the current framework.

As noted above, Commissioner Sencer described the difference between "technical" changes (i.e. revision of structures) versus "adaptive" changes (based on the attitudes and relationships of the people working within a particular structure). He suggested that technical change by itself will not be sufficient to bring about the aspirational vision just described.

This is a valid point. The Commission appreciates the efforts Providence Teachers Union leadership has undertaken in the past to move towards the vision of shared accountability. It is no doubt frustrating to embark on a bold initiative that is later abandoned for whatever reason. It also is clear that the vision of shared accountability will require major concessions from the School Department administration; for example, teaching professionals cannot be micromanaged with minute-by-minute class scripts in a collaborative setting of shared decision-making and responsibility.

The path to implementation requires a combination of technical changes and adaptive changes, concessions of traditional prerogatives held by both management and labor, and a willingness of both sides to move beyond past disappointments and/or their current "comfort zone" to step forward in the best interests of the children of Providence.

2. Best Practices for Providence

As described by the experts, Providence Public Schools can fulfill this vision by incorporating these programmatic elements:

a. Collaborative Decision-Making Structures

Teacher voice in matters of education policy, including curriculum and professional development, provides important benefits to teachers and to students. It recognizes the teachers' critical role as a learning professional, providing career fulfillment. It benefits students by adding an important source of skills and experience to effective education policy.

The Springfield Empowerment Zone contract contains an example of collaboration structures. Each school has a Teacher Leadership Team "as the vehicle for shared decision-making at the school level." (*See* Articles 22, 23).[21] The contract provides that the team will work with the school administration to design and implement a continuous improvement plan that will include components as the development and approval of working conditions, defining priorities and goals and setting strategic actions.

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[21] The current Providence Teachers Union contract has, at ¶26.5.6, a provision for instructional leadership teams that could serve as a starting point for developing this initiative in upcoming negotiations.

b. Accountability for Administrators

School administration (both at the building level and in the central office) can and must demonstrate and support its commitment to collaboration by strengthening elements into the evaluation rubric that require and reward successful collaborative behavior.

1. Rhode Island's Building Administrator Standards

The Rhode Island Department of Education has published a model evaluation program for building administrators.[22] The evaluations are based in part on Professional Responsibility PR4, which states:

> PR4: Works toward a safe, supportive, collaborative culture by demonstrating respect for everyone, including other educators, students, parents, and other community members in all actions and interactions.
>
> Building administrators who meet this standard at the highest level (4) have these attributes:
>
> Interactions between the building administrator and other adults reflect a commitment to positivity and a high degree of respect. She or he is admired by his or her colleagues and community members interact with him or her in a positive and respectful manner. The building administrator models good leadership behaviors for students and colleagues.
>
> Element 2A of the evaluation rubric (Professionalism), reads as follows:
>
> 2A: Develops a strong, collaborative culture focused on student learning and the development of professional competencies which leads to quality instruction.
>
> A building administrator earns the highest grade of "4" when:
>
> The school is a professional learning community where the experiences and expertise of all staff is valued and maximized to support student success. The school culture encourages continual improvement through collaboration, research-based instructional practices that are shared, and high expectations for all. Responsibility for positive student outcomes is a focus for the school shared by all staff members.

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22 *See* Rhode Island Model Evaluation and Support System viewable at https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/BA_Guidebook_Ed_V_2019.pdf?ver=2019-08-29-080952-693

A building administrator's score for Component 2A counts for approximately 5% of the administrators' total evaluation. RIDE does not have a published rubric for central office administrators. The Commission did not obtain a copy of Providence Public Schools evaluation materials for central office administrators.

2. Standards from other school districts

Among possible examples of such elements are these:

(a) Newark Public Schools Leadership Framework,[23] Item 5c:

5c. Communication and Interpersonal Skills. Listens and communicates effectively and strategically based on the situation, and an understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds, cultures, and needs. (PSEL 2e, 8c, 9k, 9l, 10c, 10d, 10g, 10i) Builds rapport with stakeholders and staff by listening, tailoring all messages, and ensuring ideas are understood; Manages nearly all conflicts to positive resolution; Works to transform disagreement and dissent into opportunities for mutual gain.

An administrator can earn a rating of "highly effective" in this element by achieving the following:

Builds rapport with stakeholders and staff by listening, tailoring all messages, and ensuring ideas are understood; Manages nearly all conflicts to positive resolution; Works to transform disagreement and dissent into opportunities for mutual gain.

(b) The Connecticut Leader Evaluation and Support Rubric 2017[24]

Element 4.2 (School Culture and Climate): Establishes a positive climate for student achievement, as well as high expectations for adult and student conduct.

To earn a rating of "Exemplary," an administrator must achieve (in part) the following:

Establishes a positive climate for student achievement, as well as high expectations for adult and student conduct.

The list of potential sources of evidence includes: Faculty or departmental meeting agendas, minutes, observations; observations of faculty and communication with parents and families.

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23 https://www.nps.k12.nj.us/documents/npsleadership-framework-min/

24 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vM70A4DnLCorBe6qBwX0rkxPFVHt9JF2/view

(c) Salt Lake City, Utah Educational Administrator Evaluation Handbook

Performance Expectation 1C: Education leaders sustain strong organizational commitment to vision, mission and goals aimed at student improvement.

Element 2: Engages faculty, staff and school community by making decisions informed by vision, mission, data, research, and best practices to identify and eliminate barriers, shape plans, programs, and activities, and regularly review their effects.

A "Highly Effective" administrator is one who "Engages all staff and diverse stakeholder groups in the decision-making process and uses data, research, and best practices to identify and eliminate barriers to accomplishing goals by regularly reviewing and evaluating the outcomes of planning, program development, and activities associated with vision, mission, and goals."

Providence Public Schools can enhance administrative accountability by including a standard that articulates collaboration more clearly, and by assigning it a greater weight in the rubric score. Providence Public Schools also can adopt similar measures for central office administrators, and adding to that evaluation rubric a priority for supporting site-based management. Also, an effective standard will require accurate forms of assessment and measurement. Some school districts use surveys to assess a school's culture and climate, and in this context faculty surveys may provide useful evaluative data.

c. Sharing of Best Teaching Practices

Teachers need the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues to advance their professional skills to their highest level through such programs as common planning time and peer assistance. Article 26(B) of the Springfield Empowerment Zone contract provides an example, requiring all schools to provide educators with professional development and collaboration activities developed through collaboration between management and each school's teacher leadership team.

d. Site-based Management

In order to provide a quality education to every child, Providence Public Schools needs to ensure that professionals in each school have the flexibility to adapt their programs to the needs of their student population. Combining this element with the previous two, each school can, through a collaborative leadership structure, best adapt its program to its students' distinctive backgrounds and needs through in such matters as budget, personnel, and professional development.

While building a community within a school, site-based management also can nurture the engagement of the families and other stakeholders who form the community around each school. The National Education Association has described a model for a community school that "empowers students, staff, families and community to articulate a roadmap for schools and communities to co-create a plan that addresses the unique priorities and vision of the local community."[25]

The Springfield Empowerment Zone contract provides an example of how school-based flexibility can be implemented in a collaborative structure. Under that collective bargaining agreement, decisions concerning:

- Proposed school budget and staffing;
- Allocation of discretionary funds;
- School curriculum;

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25 https://www.nea.org/student-success/great-public-schools/community-schools?utm_medium=paid-search&utm_source=google&utm_campaign=community-schools&utm_content=&ms=ads-community-schools-se&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw2a6wBhCVARIsABPeH1uPrLDOHT0yuemBQWZlWsG2wmttOAM_12tuj3YVdky_O8sM1gLKAYwaAr7xEALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds In their March 29, 2020 Report, the Providence Teachers Union endorsed community schools. *See* https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/PPS/commdocs/PTU%202_20231108155508%20(2).pdf , p.3.

- Professional development;
- School calendar;
- Class coverage and substitutes;
- Class size;
- Scheduling of school-wide parent-teacher meetings; and
- Other school-based matters

all are made through discussion and agreement between each school's administration and its teacher leadership team. *See* Article 24. In contrast, the current Providence Teachers Union contrast mandates a single set of these working conditions (and many others) for all schools, requiring a series of procedures (involving a 70% faculty approval vote) for any school to request and receive exemption from the district-wide mandates.[26]

The Springfield Empowerment Zone contract also delegates personnel decisions to each school's administration, including the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority (*See* Article 28).

e. Removing Seniority-Only Mandates

As is true for any learned profession, teaching experience provides a valuable foundation for skill and effectiveness; however, it is far from the only determinant of effective teaching. Survey data reveals that effective teachers feel frustrated when their less effective but more senior colleagues receive greater compensation and recognition. Students miss out when a strict

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26 *See* Providence Teachers Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/PPS/commdocs/PTU-CBA-September-1-2020-August-31-2023-FINAL.pdf, Article 8. Under Article 8-29, schools can apply for exemption from the contract's district-wide mandates, provided that the applications are supported by a vote of approval by at least 70% of the teachers.

seniority-based class assignment structure deprives them of the teacher(s) best suited to meet their educational needs.

A decision to remove seniority-only mandates will also advance faculty diversity. Providence Public Schools' efforts to recruit and retain teachers whose backgrounds and cultures match that of their students (which can promote teacher effectiveness) are compromised and frustrated by seniority-based mandates for classroom assignments and layoffs, as the gains in diversity from recent hires could be wiped out with layoffs based exclusively on seniority. It was therefore not surprising to learn that Rhode Island is one of a small number of states that has not moved on from these restrictive mandates.

f. Peer Review and Expedited Due Process

Along with teacher voice, shared accountability depends upon teacher accountability based on professional standards. Under the current labor-management in Providence, teacher union leadership has a legal obligation to represent and defend all members who face termination proceedings due to inadequate performance, even if the teacher in fact is performing inadequately. By bringing teachers into the role of peer assistance, these mentor teachers can measure their colleagues' ability to meet professional standards once that assistance is provided. Should peer assistance not succeed, the union should have the authority and responsibility to recommend a teacher's non-retention, at which point the teacher would receive sufficient due process in an efficient and expedited manner.

In an article posted on the American Federation of Teachers website,[27] Richard Kahlenberg describes the system established in Toledo, where a nine-member advisory board (five teachers and four administrators) make decisions on assisting and, if necessary, terminating

[27] https://www.aft.org/ae/fall2007/kahlenberg_sb

the employment of new and veteran teachers with six votes required for action. This type of collaborative structure provides a foundation of support for teachers who can benefit from it, while removing the need for an adversary process if the advisory board concludes the teacher cannot meet professional standards. In that event, due process can be expedited beyond the multiple layers of adversary review currently in place under Rhode Island law.[28] Massachusetts, which is a national leader in student achievement,[29] provides a good example of simple due process, in which teachers receive a prompt arbitration as due process for job decisions.[30]

These examples of best practices are not exclusive; instead, educators in Providence have the opportunity to develop versions of these elements that are best suited to local conditions and needs.

g. Career Ladder

Professional educators deserve a career ladder in which their acceptance of additional responsibility and attainment are reflected in their position and compensation.

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28 At one time, Providence had a robust peer assistance program, which was later scaled back due to budgetary reasons. While this initiative had its benefits, Providence teachers retained full due process rights under Rhode Island, as described at n. 19, above.

29 *See, e.g.,* https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-public-school-rankings-education-wallethub/

30 M.G.L. ch. 71, §42

IV. Recommendations

The Commission recommends bringing best practices in labor-management relations, professional standards, school-based flexibility and educator accountability to Providence Public Schools through a combination of collaborative collective bargaining, building capacity and removing legislative barriers.

A. Collaborative Collective Bargaining

Several experts emphasized that progress is best achieved through collaboration, rather than through mandates. The Springfield, Massachusetts Empowerment Zone collective bargaining agreement[31] provides a model for labor management collaboration in the best interests of students. Among the salient features of this contract are the following:

- Joint Commitment to Collaboration (Article 7)
- Building Cooperation (Article 10)
- Dispute Resolution Process: Expedited Mediation and Arbitration (Article 19)
- Establish teacher leadership teams as the vehicle for shared decision-making at the school level (Articles 22-24)
- Authorizing principals to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority (Article 28)
- Authorizing the Empowerment Zone to reassign displaced teachers and staff to positions for which they are qualified (Article 30)
- Site-based management for professional development (Article 33)
- Reduced role for seniority in:
    - Teacher assignments (Article 29)
    - Teacher displacements (Article 30)
    - Reductions in force (Article 36)

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31 https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/PPS/commdocs/educators%20cba%20-%20sezp%20sea%202021-2025.pdf

- Expedited dismissal and discipline (Article 37)
- Establish a joint labor-management evaluation team (Article 44)
- Career ladder (Article 63), including:
    - Stipends/additional pay for leadership and other roles (Article 65)
    - Additional compensation for exceptional performance (Article 67)
- Shared expectations for collaboration between principals and teacher leadership teams (Appendix A)

The current Providence contract contains attempts at implementing some shared accountability principles, but the parties have not been able to date to build them into a sustainable foundation. An accurate and prominent statement of these principles within the collective bargaining agreement is needed. Whatever the cause of past difficulties, both sides must now look to the future and share a commitment to accelerate dramatically the pace of progress towards shared accountability.

The history behind the Springfield Empowerment Zone contract provides important lessons for Providence Public Schools in how to accomplish this worthy, if difficult goal. At the time, Springfield faced the threat of an imminent state takeover by a Massachusetts-style receivership. District and Union officials collaborated to retain their role in finding the best approach to educate the district's children. As a result, the Empowerment Zone contract marked a giant leap to shared accountability in the best interest of the students.

The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP) has produced improved student outcomes and school culture for a district that contains the state's lowest per capita income, and in which 92% of students are of color. As described in its 2023 Overview[32], SEZP's accomplishments include the following:

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32 *See* https://sezp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SEZP-Overview-2023.pdf and other data from SEZP.

- +160% school leaders of color over 5 years;
- +54% teachers of color over 5 years;
- 96% of teachers ratified the most recent contract;
- +40% high school graduation rate during 2017-21;
- Two of the six Mass. Schools that exited "underperforming" status in 2018-20;
- The highest improving school in Mass. during 2018-20;
- In 2020-21:
    - Substantial decrease in suspensions at 9 (of 12) schools;
    - Increased attendance at 10 (of 12) schools;
    - Decreased chronic absenteeism at 10 (of 12) schools;
- According to a nationally normed 2021 survey of parents:
    - 74% approve of SEZP's expectations of teachers;
    - 73% approve of school leadership;
    - 69% would not change their student's school if given the opportunity;
- When the district began in 2014, all of its seats were in low-quality schools (school accountability percentiles 1 to 9). In 2023, 46% of SEZP's seats had improved in quality (23% 10th to 19th percentile, 17% 20th to 29th percentile and 6% 60th to 69th percentile).

Springfield's history is not unique. According to Professor Alonso, Baltimore's district and teachers also agreed to shared accountability reforms due to a shared sense of urgency concerning the risk of State takeover; indeed, he stated his regret that Providence had failed to take advantage of the imminent State takeover in 2019 to have the conversations that occurred at Commission meetings. Professor Reville noted that the Lawrence public schools took a quantum

leap towards shared accountability when the State receiver, Jeff Riley, chose to collaborate with the teachers' union rather than exercise his broad powers under that state's receivership law.[33] Peter McWalters described the temporary success at Hope High School, where collaboration was established after he conducted a show cause hearing in which he held that State law empowered him to change collective bargaining agreements unilaterally.

While, as Professor Alonso noted, labor and management in Providence Public Schools missed the opportunity to agree to a transformative contract in order to avoid a State takeover, there are other reasons to believe that current conditions can support a shared sense of urgency. During Commission hearings and meetings, teachers expressed their frustration with the State takeover, and Providence Teachers Union leadership demanded an end to the takeover in March, 2022.[34]

As of today, the State takeover's initial term of five years will end in November, 2024, but it can be extended past that time. The Crowley Act assigns to the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education the responsibility of overseeing the takeover. On February 27, 2024, the Council approved regulations concerning the return of local control.[35] Under those regulations, the Commissioner will provide a report and recommendation to the Council concerning the status of the takeover that includes an analysis of the following:

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33 Mr. Reville stated that the Massachusetts receivership law "made the difference" in Lawrence, and that while he supports unions, he prioritized the needs of children.

34 *See, e.g.,* https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/nothing-but-broken-promises-providence-teachers-demand-end-to-state-takeover-of-district/

35 https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2024-02/Encl6a_RegsApproval.pdf

1. If the LEA [or local education authority, in this case Providence Public Schools] has:

    a. made sufficient progress on the academic and other progress measures identified within its turnaround plan;

    b. the capacity and readiness to continue to make progress on the academic and other progress measures, as identified within the LEAs turnaround plan, without the intervention and support provided pursuant to the Crowley Act;

2. If the LEA's local school committee or board has the capacity and readiness to:

    a. support the LEA's continued progress on academic and other progress measures, as identified within the LEA's turnaround plan, without the intervention and support provided pursuant to the Crowley Act;

    b. provide said support consistent with responsibilities outlined in R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-9, as well as other site-based management and governance best practices; and

3. If the legally responsible municipal entity has the capacity to:

    a. support the LEA's school committee or board to ensure the LEA's continued progress on academic and other progress measures, as identified within the LEA's turnaround plan, without the intervention and support provided pursuant to the Crowley Act, and

    b. demonstrate said support through the contribution of sufficient local funding to the local school committee or board necessary to sustain and continue the LEA's progress, including compliance with statutory maintenance of effort requirements as identified in the Crowley Act.

In the meantime, the City of Providence has convened "Return to Local Control Cabinet" to, as one reporter described it, "figure out what needs to happen before the city regains control of Providence Public Schools."[36] In his presentation, former Commissioner McWalters endorsed this process, observing that Providence should set some conditions that need to be satisfied prior

[36] https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/citys-internal-working-group-preparing-for-taking-back-providence-schools/

to accepting a return to local control; in his view, the State should not just "hand back" the schools to the City; instead, "something has to come with it."

In short, the shared wish to end the State takeover in Providence can provide the same impetus for collaboration towards shared accountability that Springfield's education labor and management felt when they joined hands to prevent a State takeover from occurring. In the Commission's view, the Springfield empowerment zone contract provides a template for what labor and management can accomplish over the next several months before the current contract expires. A decision to agree to a shared accountability contract along the lines of the Springfield Empowerment Zone represents the fastest and most effective way to increase the quality of public education provided to all Providence students, as well as a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfillment for Providence educators. In this way, shared accountability can provide a roadmap for a successful conclusion of the State takeover and a reversion to local control that provides a sustainable foundation for future progress in Providence Public Schools.

B. Building Capacity

In order to bring about the "adaptive change" to support the technical changes just described, Providence Public Schools will need to build its capacity to sustain the effort. This can take several forms, including the following:

- Programs at the University of Chicago and other institutions that train principals to be managers, rather than instructional leaders (Jo Anderson, Jr.);
- Professional development (including teacher-led professional development) and common planning time (Heather Peske);
- Facilitators and training to support labor-management collaboration (Saul Rubinstein);
- Facilitators and training for interest-based bargaining (Saul Rubinstein, John Papay);
- Funding additional teacher time (or positions) to operate a robust peer assistance and review program (Jo Anderson, Andres Alonso, John Papay);

- Increasing teacher compensation taking on extra work, or for positions that are more difficult to fill due the subject matter (such as STEM) or the challenges of a particular school or population;

- Visit the Springfield Empowerment Zone and exchange ideas concerning best practices;

- Other areas that develop as the capacity building process continues.

Most of these initiatives require resources. Any decision to commit substantial additional State funds over the long term to build capacity in Providence Public Schools may face long odds in the current budget climate; however, there may be alternative short-term funding opportunities. For example, according to the Rhode Island Department of Education,[37] the federal government allocated Providence Public Schools more than $128 million under the ESSER III program, of which the district has spent just under $38 million as of November 30, 2023.[38] Under federal guidelines, those funds must be "obligated" by September 30 of this year and spent by January 28th, 2025. The ESSER III guidelines specify the permitted uses of the funds, including "addressing learning loss." While the Commission is not able to give an opinion about which capacity building programs (if any) fit within this requirement, there would appear on the surface to be room to explore these opportunities.

With regard to State funds, the Senate last year recognized that the local education aid funding formula should include greater aid for multi-language learners, of which there are many in Providence. Last year's budget implemented this reform by applying the "student success

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37 https://tableau.ride.ri.gov/t/Public/views/EsserFundsDashboard2/ESSERRIAll?%3Adisplay_count=n&%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3AshowVizHome=n),

38 Providence Public Schools representatives have recently stated that they have obligated the bulk of remaining ESSER III funds. With that said, the Commission believes there may be value in repurposing some of those funds to build capacity for shared accountability.

factor" budget increase to multi-language learners as well as students in poverty. While this was a step forward, most other states have separate additive factors for both poverty and multi-language learners, and the Senate Finance Committee last year reviewed data supporting this change. Given the large number of Providence Public Schools students who are multi-language learners and who also live in poverty, such a change to the funding formula would provide significant additional annual State aid to Providence Public Schools as part of an overall State aid increase.

Finally, the Commission recommends that the State revise the "state share" component of the funding formula to match that of Massachusetts. More specifically, Rhode Island calculates the state's share of each community's foundation budget by comparing each community's property tax base per enrolled child (as measured against the statewide average). While this measure is a useful first approximation, the fact remains that some students have greater needs, and their education requires greater resources.

Consider the example of two communities, A and B, each of which has a property tax base of $100 million and an enrollment of 100 students. Suppose, however, that A's students are all native English speakers from affluent families, while half of B's students are multi-language learners from households in poverty. As reflected in Rhode Island's funding formula, Community B's foundation budget will be substantially larger than Community A's, as "student success factor" will be added to the cost to educate each student who is either in poverty or is a multi-language learner.

From this difference in the composition of student population, it follows that Community B will require a larger "tax effort" to pay its share of the cost to educate its resident student

population than will Community A. Because Rhode Island's current funding formula does not account for this difference, our formula would apply the same "state share" to both communities.

In contrast, Massachusetts calculates state share by comparing each community's property tax base to its foundation budget, rather than its property tax base per student. Adjusting the state share in this way would be "expenditure neutral," i.e., it would not require additional State dollars. The Commission asked the Senate Fiscal office to calculate how this revision would affect State aid to Providence Public Schools from the current year's budget. The Fiscal Office estimated that this change would increase state aid by approximately $3 million. Senate Bill S-2569[39] offers a version of this revision to the funding formula.

There also appears an opportunity to redirect resources within the current teacher's contract. Providence Public Schools currently spend approximately $5.8 million in pay increases for teachers who have earned advanced degrees. Expert presentations (Heather Peske and John Papay) noted that the research data does not correlate teachers' attainment of these degrees with greater effectiveness in the classroom.

The Commission recommends that Providence Public Schools make use of these external and internal opportunities to assemble resources to build capacity, and that labor and management collaborate on the best types of capacity to build.

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39 https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText24/SenateText24/S2569.pdf. The bill could be subject to further refinements. For example, the "foundation budget" in the current funding formula does not include the additional funds provided for multilanguage learners; instead, these funds are part of a categorical pool. Massachusetts incorporates the multilanguage funds into its foundation budget. Were Rhode Island to do so, it would increase the State share for urban districts with large populations of multilanguage learners.

C. Improving the Education System

Every child deserves the right to receive an equitable, adequate and meaningful education. To provide our children with a meaningful education, we as state, must be willing to implement changes that move us away from the traditional norms.

In 1993, Massachusetts did just that with the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA). The act was designed to address the gaps that existed in K-12 public education, specifically those between lower- and upper-income communities. MERA, at the time, was a monumental shift that allowed Massachusetts to transform the public education system by establishing foundation levels of spending for each school district, measuring education progress through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), establishing higher standards for students, and an accountability system to hold schools and districts responsible for the progress in meeting these new standards. MERA provided local school districts with the resources to improve the teaching environment for their students and educators, while experiencing drastic improvements in their national academic standards. Today, Massachusetts is considered to be one of the best states in the nation for education.

Rhode Island could achieve similar results. We have dedicated teachers, institutions of higher education that are educating the next generation of teachers, and we're making significant investments in modernizing our public schools. The next step is to move us towards a constitutional change to provide every child with a meaningful education. For three consecutive years, the Senate has passed a joint resolution to place a question on the statewide ballot asking voters to amend the state constitution to guarantee "an equitable, adequate and meaningful education to each child." This amendment is similar to Massachusetts constitutional amendment

that helped them transform its public educational system and ensure the systems that are failing children are addressed.

The Commission's first (and foundational) legislative recommendation is to gain the support of the House of Representatives to allow the voters the opportunity to approve a constitutional amendment guaranteeing a judicially enforceable right to education. If we are unable to move forward with a constitutional change on this year's ballot, this commission recommends legislative changes for the Providence School system that advance shared accountability, including:

- Amend R.I.G.L. §16-13-6 (specifically for Providence Public Schools), which currently mandates that all layoffs due to declining enrollment must be made exclusively on the basis of seniority. One good example can be found in Massachusetts, M.G.L. ch. 71, §42, which provides that these layoffs can be governed by collective bargaining agreement, provided that "[t]he school committee and the collective bargaining representative may negotiate for seniority or length of service only as a tiebreaker in personnel actions under this paragraph among teachers whose qualifications are no different using the qualifications collectively bargained for."
- Streamline (specifically for Providence Public Schools) the due process requirements under the Rhode Island Teacher Tenure Act (R.I.G.L. §16-13-4) to consist of arbitration under a specified timeline, as provided for example in Massachusetts (M.G.L. ch. 71, §42).
- Amend (specifically for Providence Public Schools) R.I.G.L. §16-7-29, which mandates a salary schedule "recognizing years of service, experience, and training." A Providence-specific "career ladder" amendment could be enacted to allow teachers

and the administration to negotiate contracts with alternative compensation programs, creating an option of a career ladder that rewards other measures of teaching effectiveness, such as taking on additional responsibilities, becoming a teacher mentor or active participation in a school leadership team.

- Create statutory authority for site-based innovation schools, such as the Massachusetts model enacted at M.G.L. ch. 71, §92.
- If collaboration to reach a Springfield-type contract proves impossible, consider changing Rhode Island's law to match that in Massachusetts by either:
    - Clarifying the State's authority under the Crowley Act (as understood by former Commissioner McWalters) through a declaratory judgment action; or
    - Amending the Crowley Act as necessary to align the State's authority with that of the Massachusetts receiver, as set forth in M.G.L. ch. 69, §1J (takeover of individual school) and M.G.L. ch. 69, §1K (takeover of school district).[40]

D. Aligning Administrator Standards with Shared Accountability Principles

The Commission recommends that Providence Public Schools apply shared accountability values to administrative practice by increasing the priority of collaborative skills and behavior in the rubrics for administrators, and emphasizing the importance of supporting site-based management for central office administrators. The Commission recommends the development of a robust mentoring program in which accomplished administrators provide counsel and support to their less experienced colleagues.

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40 The Commission did not perform a legal analysis as to the Crowley Act or other provisions in Rhode Island law provide sufficient authority for Providence Public Schools and the Providence Teachers Union to enter into an "empowerment zone" type agreement as currently exists in Springfield; however, the Commission recommends the passage of enabling legislation should it be necessary.

This Report contains proposals to address a complex system built upon practices that have developed over decades.[41] While the Commission has attempted to make the best use of the limited time it had, the Senate and/or the General Assembly may conclude that they would benefit from further review and analysis.

V. Conclusion

While many students in Providence Public Schools graduate each year with a quality public education (provided by talented teachers), thousands of their classmates are left behind every year to the disappointment of both the students and the teachers who wish they could do more. There are a broad range of factors that contribute to this unfortunate result, many of which are beyond the control of Providence Public Schools. There is, however, a major lever of progress for student achievement and teacher fulfillment that is eminently within the control of labor and management, namely the evolution to shared accountability. The easiest way to make this progress is through a Springfield-style collective bargaining agreement that will serve both students and teachers, as well as facilitate the end to the State takeover. The General Assembly can support this progress through legislation that builds capacity and removes (for Providence only) certain restrictive mandates currently in effect.

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41 *See* n. 3 (PROBE Report).

Addendum 1
2023 Senate Resolution 440 Senate Bill 2023-1131

http://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText23/SenateText23/S1131.pdf

2023 -- S 1131

LC003236

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Senator Samuel D. Zurier

Date Introduced: June 15, 2023

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

WHEREAS, The Providence Public Schools (PPS) comprise the largest school district in the State, with more than 21,000 students and more than 2,000 educators; and

WHEREAS, The PPS student body is one of most diverse in the State, with a student population that is 65 percent Hispanic, 16 percent White, 5 percent Asian, 4 percent Multi-Racial, and 1 percent Native American; and

WHEREAS, Nearly one-third of Providence students are English Language Learners, and the majority of Providence students' families speak one of 54 primary languages that is not English; and

WHEREAS, Eighty-five percent of the PPS student body qualifies for free or reduced lunch, the second highest incidence of poverty in Rhode Island public schools as measured by this criterion; and

WHEREAS, The socioeconomic diversity of the student body in Providence presents unique challenges and opportunities for the district's professional staff; and

WHEREAS, Too few PPS students have been able to obtain academic proficiency for too many years, as measured by the State's and Nation's Report Card assessments; and

WHEREAS, Enrollment in PPS has declined as students have transferred out of the district into charter schools, creating displacements and disruptions within the schools and their staff; and

WHEREAS, The basic framework under State law governing the delivery of public education, as applied to the Providence Public Schools, has not been significantly modified in many years; and

WHEREAS, The quality of the education Providence Public Schools students receive in their schools depends critically upon its professional educators; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created consisting of fifteen (15) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be the Turnaround Superintendent, or designee; one of whom shall be the Commissioner of the Rhode Island Department of Education, or designee; one of whom shall be the Mayor of the City of Providence, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the Providence City Council, to be appointed by the President of the Providence City Council; one of whom shall be a member of the Providence School Board, to be appointed by the President of the Providence School Board; one of whom shall be the building administrator, to be appointed by the Superintendent of Providence Public Schools; one of whom shall be a teacher, to be appointed by the President of the Providence Teachers Union; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, or designee; one of whom shall be a parent of children in the Providence public schools, to be appointed by the Senate President; one of whom shall be a student currently enrolled or recently graduated from the Providence public schools, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; and two (2) of whom shall be ex-officio public members with experience in education to serve in an advisory capacity to the commission, to be appointed by the Senate President.

In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study commission, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in place of a legislator; provided that, the Senate President or the Minority Leader of the political party that is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

The purpose of said commission shall be to:

• Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law; and

• Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and great school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.

All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or

desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall be appointed and meet at the call of the President of the Senate by July 31, 2023, and shall organize and select from among the legislators, a Chairperson.

A quorum for the commission's formation and activity will be a minimum of eight (8) voting members.

The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission shall develop and submit its recommendations to the Senate, no later than January 24, 2024, and said commission shall expire on June 30, 2024.

LC003236

EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

SENATE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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This resolution would create a fifteen (15) member special legislative commission whose purpose it would be to review and provide recommendations for professional and labor-management standards for employees of the Providence Public Schools, and who would report back to the Senate no later than January 24, 2024, and whose life would expire on June 30, 2024.

LC003236

Addendum 2

Commission Agendas

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Thursday, September 21, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion by members concerning the Commission's charge and their experience/perspectives with the Providence Public Schools.
III. Suggestions for reading materials
IV. Suggestions for presentations
V. Schedule meetings and hearings.
VI. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this meeting.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, October 10, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Room 313

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Public comment relating to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

This meeting will be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, October 17, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Room 313

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Public comment relating to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

This meeting will be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Thursday, October 26, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Room 313

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Public comment relating to the Commission's charge
   a. Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law.
   b. Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and greater school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.
III. Adjournment

This meeting will be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, November 1, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Jo Anderson Jr. - Consortium for Educational Change (CEC)
III. Adjournment

This meeting will not be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 7, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Heather Peske – President, National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)
III. Nancy Mullen – Retired Principal, Hope High School & Marshfield High School (Fall River, MA).
IV. Paul Reville – Harvard University, Founding Director: Education Redesign Lab
V. Evan Stone – Co-Founder of Educators for Excellence
VI. Adjournment

This meeting will not be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 14, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge - State House

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. John Papay – Director, Annenberg Institute: Brown University
III. Peter McWalters – Former Commissioner, RIDE
IV. Andres Alonso – Former Professor of Practice, Harvard University; Former Deputy Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education
V. Saul Rubinstein – Director, Collaborative School Leadership Initiative: Rutgers University
VI. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

TELEVISION AND LIVESTREAM INFORMATION

The meeting will be televised by Capitol Television on: Cox Communications, channels 15 and 61 for high definition; i3Broadband (Formally Full Channel) on 15; and Verizon, on channel 34. Livestreaming is available at https://www.rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx.

POSTED: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023, 1:50 P.M.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 28, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentations related to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, December 4, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentations related to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, December 12, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentations related to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Notice of Meeting

DATE: Monday, January 22, 2024
TIME: 5:00 P.M.
PLACE: Senate Lounge – State House

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this meeting.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

The meeting will be televised on Capitol Television, which can be seen on Cox Channels 15, and 61, in high definition on Cox Channel 1061, on Full Channel on Channel 15 and on Channel 34 by Verizon subscribers.

It will also be live streamed at https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/

POSTED: THURSAY, JANUARY 18, 2024, 2:20 PM

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, January 29, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, February 5, 2024
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, March 18, 2024
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, May 6, 2024
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Call meeting to order
II. Discussion/Consideration of report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this meeting.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Addendum 3

Commission Meeting Presentations and Public Testimony

1. September 21, 2023
2. October 10, 2023
3. October 17, 2023
4. October 26, 2023
5. November 1, 2023
6. November 7, 2023
7. November 14, 2023
8. November 28, 2023
9. December 4, 2023
10. December 12, 2023
11. January 22, 2024
12. January 29, 2024
13. February 5, 2024
14. March 18, 2024
15. May 6, 2024

September 21, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/472?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/9.21/S.%20Lusi%20Letter.pdf

Susan Lusi – Notice of Absence

Meeting Summary

The first meeting of the Senate Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools was Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 5:00pm in the Senate Lounge. Chairman Samuel Zurier called the meeting to order. The first item on the agenda was to welcome and introduce all commission members. Each commission member introduced themselves and stated briefly what they would like to accomplish while serving on the commission. Members gave a wide range of remarks that consisted of various key points. These ideas entailed potentially developing the correct framework for best practice, create school conditions where trust and cooperation happens, and focus on excellence in learning and world class talent. Multiple members expressed that adults should think somewhat differently to overcome these ongoing problems and also listen to what teachers, students, and families have for suggestions. Overall, it is the consensus that this is a real opportunity to solve the current issues being faced in Providence Public Schools and a team approach is necessary to get the job done. Lastly, Chairman Zurier discussed with the commission members future meeting dates and meeting agendas. It was determined that three meetings be held for public comment from stakeholders and three business meetings from experts. The Chairman then made a motion to adjourn.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Thursday, September 21, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion by members concerning the Commission's charge and their experience/perspectives with the Providence Public Schools.
III. Suggestions for reading materials
IV. Suggestions for presentations
V. Schedule meetings and hearings.
VI. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this meeting.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Dear Study Commission Members,

I'm sorry that I'm unable to be with you this evening and appreciate Senator Zurier's willingness to read this for me.

My hopes for the study commission:

My hope is that this commission will develop a legislative framework for education in Providence Public Schools that obligates the adults in the system – management and labor – to take collective responsibility for student success and to work together in ways that are dictated by best practice. Doing this will require working together to create healthy and supportive teaching and learning environments (cultures) in schools, because a toxic adult culture will never enable teachers to do their best work, and the student culture mirrors the adult culture in schools. Miserable teachers and administrators don't create joyful and engaging learning environments for students.

I know that relationships between labor and management are not good right now, and I still believe that changing the legislative framework that is the basis of that relationship is essential. It is easy for management to say a particular union leader is "impossible to work with," or for labor to say that a particular superintendent or commissioner "is ridiculous," but we have ample evidence that the challenges in Providence go beyond individuals. I started working in Providence when Diana Lam was superintendent, Phil DeCecco was PTU president, and Peter McWalters was commissioner. Now looking back over nine superintendents, three union leaders, and four commissioners, (with apologies to anyone I may have missed) I think it's fair to say that no one has been able to put the system on a path of sustained progress. This is a systemic problem, and students and families can't wait for it to be solved on the basis of personality. We need to create conditions that make collaboration the norm, not the exception.

I also want to be clear that I think doing this work is absolutely necessary for improving education in Providence but will not be sufficient. Creating a different legislative framework will not immediately improve the current relationships. What it can do, though, is to create the obligation to work together. Right now, it's too easy to retreat to respective corners and just say "no," rather than working together to create a path forward for educational improvement.

Every school that I have deeply admired, including in Providence, has been characterized by adults working closely together to continuously improve their

work with students. Creating these environments doesn't happen by chance. It requires intentional, ongoing work and a shared commitment to creating excellence. When Steve Smith and I tried to support this type of work, we had some successes, but not nearly enough, and state law did not support our efforts. I want to see that change.

Thank you all.

Sue Lusi

People I would recommend to testify – in no particular order and not exhaustive:

Peter McWalters, former Commissioner of RI

Heather Peske, National Center for Teacher Quality

Susan Moore Johnson, Harvard Graduate School of Education, emeritus

October 10, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/920?site=1

Meeting Summary

The second meeting of Senate Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools was Thursday, October 10, 2023 at 5:00pm in the Senate Lounge. This was the first meeting to hold public comment. No one was in attendance. The Chairman made a motion for adjournment.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, October 10, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Room 313

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Public comment relating to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

This meeting will be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

October 17, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/1409?site=1

Meeting Summary

The third meeting of the Senate Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools was Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 5:00pm in the Senate Lounge. Chairman Samuel Zurier called the meeting to order. This is the second meeting schedule for public comment to listen to stakeholders. Three individuals signed up to testify. The first person who testified was Tyrell Stevens, a member of the Providence School Board. He considers himself to be very outspoken member of the school board and very proud to be a member of the board. Tyrell references the John Hopkins report as a resource that was utilized in the past and made a recommendation to create a new report as we come to the end of the state takeover of Providence Public Schools and see if any progress has been made. In regards to transparency, Tyrell feels as though it is "not where it should be." He references a recent incident when a firearm was on school property and only a select group of people were informed about this issue. When Tyrell reached out to school administrators about the issue via email, responses were lacking and did not address the problem. In conclusion, Tyrell believes proper oversight is necessary to solve the issue Providence Public Schools is facing. The second person to testify is Michelle Miller who is parent of Providence Public School Students. Michelle addresses her concerns with the toxic environment and mass exodus of teachers that has occurred over the last year. In particular, she addressed the unexpected school closures; one being Allan Shawn Feinstein Elementary School that her daughter used to attend. She expresses her concerns with the push for charter schools and lack of communication across the districts. She recommends the general assembly take active action rather than listening to what the district has to say. The third person who testified was Patrick Shelton who is a fifth-grade teacher at the Martin Luther King Elementary School in Providence. From Mr. Shelton's perspective he believes the current issues fall under three different categories; oversight and accountability, and teacher empowerment. Starting with oversight and accountability he references the John Hopkins report. He states one of the biggest findings from this report was that PPS had an extremely hard time making decisions with the issue approval from numerous people. It was anticipated that the takeover would make things more streamlined when it came to decision making. Overall, Patrick feels that has not been the case. When addressing teacher empowerment, Patrick states that his daily schedule is chosen for him and there is no room for uniqueness and creativity. Common planning time has turned into a "pre-planned meeting" and is already decided for you. Overall, the top down decision-making process is not affective for teachers and the school communities they are a part of. The fourth person who testified was Jennifer Wood former assistant to RIDE Commissioner Peter McWalters, and is currently the executive director for RI Center for Justice. The bulk of her testimony addresses that we have an abundance of data analysis but have taken no action to solve any of the current issues PPS is facing with the data we have. Similar to what others have said, the lack in decision making is the major proponent of the issues they are facing. There has been a change in how we

approach education policy and education decision making; more analysis than actively making changes. The goal would be to meet teachers and student where they are, rather than expect something from them they cannot achieve. The fifth person who testified was Kaitlyn Crudale who is a parent of Providence Public School students. Kaitlyn has two elementary aged students in the Providence Public School system and states the state takeover "has screwed up her whole family." She has noticed a significant decline in her children's math and reading skills since the takeover, and her children being transferred to different schools due to arbitrary school closures. After Allen Shawn Feinstein closed, Kaitlyn was promised her children would end up at the same new school. Ultimately, that wasn't the case and she had to advocate and "harass" department at administrators to change that. Overall, Kaitlyn states she misses her old school community and feels funding was not allocated properly and was focused on updating schools rather than fix schools that needed it. The sixth person who testified was Carol Marshall a retired teacher from Hope High School. She stated during her time as a teacher under the direction of former commissioner Peter McWalters, the opportunity to be able to be compensated for extended time was key in solving the problems Hope High School was facing in the nineties. The strategic planning that took place during this time was key into making the students a priority. In this generation, teachers are "completely demoralized" and how standardized testing got implemented was not beneficial. Standardized testing took away from teaching. Carol concludes by stating that the focus should be creating school where the teachers want to teach and provide an education for all students no matter the learning style.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, October 17, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Room 313

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Public comment relating to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

This meeting will be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

October 26, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/1928?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/10.26/KCatone%201026_20231027135731.pdf

Keith Catone – Testimony

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/10.26/KScheidler%201026_20231027135819.pdf

Katherine Scheidler – Testimony

Meeting Summary

The third meeting of the Senate Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools was Thursday, October 17, 2023 at 5:00pm in the Senate Lounge. Chairman Samuel Zurier called the meeting to order. The committee received two pieces of written testimony. This is the third and final meeting schedule for public comment to listen to stakeholders. Three individuals signed up to testify. The Chairman states Keith Catone and Kay Shielder submitted written testimony on the record. The first person who testified was Katherine Shideler a retired teacher from Hope High School. She states that the Providence Teacher Union has a "my way or the highway"attitude which restricts the teacher's performance and is holding schools back. Katherine discusses how the Providence Teacher Union gave a $2,000 stipend to teachers who voted yes and approved the new contract negotiations. This is unheard off and not a common practice. Katherine concludes by stating that the union's main goal is to protect teachers. While this is good, it protects "bad apples" who shouldn't be protected. Instead of being fired they are often just transferred to another school. She feels that the legislator can make the changes necessary and hopefully the changes are made. The second person who testified was Andy Steward a high school English teacher in the Providence Public School District. Andy has been on medical leave due to unforeseen circumstances that transpired in the work place. She believes the matter was not handled properly by the school district. Providence has endangered myself and colleagues repeatedly in a manner requiring "investigation and accountability." Andy feels as though Providence Public Schools has been transphobic, and not taking her matters seriously. The third person who testified was Sara Gleason a community member from Providence. Her two children attended Providence Schools and have had adequate education. Her kids have expressed they will not move back to Providence do to the state of the schools, she does not feel they will be the best fit for her grandchildren. Most recently she has been a tutor for a child at Hope High school. The school in her viewpoint need extreme changes in site-based management. Effort has been made at Hope which should be celebrated, but change is still needed.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Thursday, October 26, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Room 313

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Public comment relating to the Commission's charge
   a. Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law.
   b. Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and greater school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.
III. Adjournment

This meeting will be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Morgan Dimaio

From: Catone, Keith <kcatone@rwu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, October 25 2023 8:02 PM
To: Morgan Dimaio
Subject: Re: [EXT] Special Senate Legislative Commission to Study Providence Public Schools

Hello Morgan,

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the final in-person listening session tomorrow. Please accept the written comments below about areas I believe are related to the promotion and support of a rewarding professional environment and greater school-based flexibility and accountability for PPSD educators. These thoughts are based upon my past experiences as a classroom teacher, teacher educator, education researcher, and education justice advocate and organizer.

Teacher Leadership
Any rewarding professional environment for teachers must include supports for teacher leadership and autonomy. These supports should include incentives for teacher-led innovation and reward/celebrate teaching practices that integrate best practices to advance deeper learning, social and emotional well-being among students *and* teachers, and equitable whole-child assessments. There are a lot of new and exciting developments across the field in these areas. Teachers need to be supported (with time and compensation) to develop their own understanding and knowledge of new practices to implement in classrooms. Those teachers who express interest and promise to play leadership roles in efforts to advance and enhance instructional initiatives should be supported and rewarded accordingly.

Professional Development
More broadly, all PPSD educators should be afforded professional development and supports to enhance instruction. In addition to the areas named above, I believe that students would benefit from teachers who are supported to implement project-based learning, culturally responsive & relevant curriculum/pedagogy, effective strategies for multilingual learning/learners, and instructional practices that work for students with disabilities and/or learning differences. I would further encourage investments in smaller class sizes, increased classroom push-in supports, and comprehensive wrap-around services for students and families, all of which are moves supportive of teachers and the teaching profession by enabling them to focus most intently on improving teaching and learning.

Especially at secondary levels, PPSD educators would benefit and learn a lot from youth-led and student-directed professional development that leverages the expertise and wisdom of the Providence youth development and leadership community. Providence has a rich ecosystem of community-based youth leadership organizations from which much can be learned. Organizations like the Alliance of RI Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE), Youth In Action, Young Voices, Providence Student Union, Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM), STEAMBox RI, New Urban Arts, Youth Pride Inc., Community Music Works, AS220 Youth, and more, are an underutilized resource for the ultimate improvement of Providence Public Schools. Investing structures and mechanisms for organizations like these, and the youth who are supported by them, to share their wisdom and expertise can greatly enhance teaching practice and develop much needed connections between teachers and the Providence community.

Connections to Students, Families, and Community

Given the work that I lead at the Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education (CYCLE), I would further emphasize the importance of structures and supports to strengthen teacher-student, teacher-family, and teacher-community connections and relationships. There is plenty of research that underscores the importance of these connections, but they do not happen without intentional focus and supports. I would encourage the exploration of proven models and practices like Parent-Teacher Home Visiting, Community Schools, student-led conferences, Academic Parent Teacher Teams, etc., that are designed to develop and deepen connections between teachers, students, families, and communities. Authentic connections and deeper relationships lay an important foundation for stronger accountability.

CYCLE's Schools & Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (SCORE) project is predicated upon a belief in the power of community-based accountability in education. In Providence, an intergenerational community research has developed a set of educational equity indicators focused on the priority areas of instructional equity, student mental health & social emotional learning, communication with families, and school culture & restorative practices. Leveraging and investing in partners like CYCLE and projects like SCORE can help develop community-driven and data-informed strategies for educational improvement, ultimately building supportive professional environments that are responsive and accountable to community-defined priorities and needs.

Thank you for inviting these reflections. If any members of the commission would like to follow-up with me to learn more or ask questions, my contact information is below.

Keith C. Catone, Ed.D. | he, him, his
Executive Director
Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education (CYCLE)
Roger Williams University
One Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903
401.276.4893 (office) | 401.339.4144 (cell)
https://cycle-rwu.org/
Follow us on Twitter & Instagram: @cycle_rwu

From: Morgan Dimaio <mdimaio@rilegislature.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 11:03 AM
To: Catone, Keith <kcatone@rwu.edu>
Subject: [EXT] Special Senate Legislative Commission to Study Providence Public Schools

Dear Keith:

The Rhode Island Senate has organized a study commission with a charge to:

- Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law; and

- Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and greater school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.

To ensure that the voice of the community is heard, the Commission has scheduled three listening sessions to take place in Room 313 of the State House, 82 Smith Street, at 5:00 p.m. on the following dates:

Tuesday, October 10
Tuesday, October 17

Thursday, October 26

We would like to hear from you and members of your organization in person if convenient. If not, we welcome your written comments forwarded to policy analyst Morgan DiMaio at mdimaio@rilegislature.gov

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Morgan E. DiMaio
Policy Analyst

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
Senate Policy Office
Room SB-27, Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

401.276.5565 – Phone
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mdimaio@rilegislature.gov

October 19, 2023

To: Senate Policy Analyst Morgan DiMaio

Senator Samuel Zurier

From Katherine Scheidler, Ed.D. former teacher, Hope High School

131 Transit Street, Providence, RI 401-751-7312

Re: **Resolution S- 1131** State Senate review of professional standards of labor-management of the Providence Public Schools as this relates to the quality of student learning for Providence students

Please see my credentials below for my school observations here.

I'm surprised and delighted to learn that the Senate is reviewing the Providence labor-management issue, in particular how the Providence Teachers Union boldly holds back the quality of student learning in Providence schools.

Specifically, the union gets its way on all issues because it's allowed to. This has to change, forced by state law, for the quality of student learning.

The recent release on Oct. 17 of the spring, 2023 state test RICAS and SAT scores, required by federal law to monitor student learning, show once again, as they do annually, that learning in Providence schools is in crisis. Because I taught English for over 25 years at Hope High School, once a fine school that East Side families sent their children to, I especially monitor Hope High School's state test RICAS scores, which in RI is the SAT test, which helps with college acceptance and financial aid. (Looking at average Providence scores isn't useful, because Classical High School's scores are always so strong, with 86% Proficient and Advanced in English in 2022, 84% Proficient and Advanced in English in 2023, 57% Proficient and above in math in 2023, which boosts the school district average.)

In 2022, Hope eleventh graders scored 66% below Proficient in English on the state test, and over 95% below Proficient in math, unacceptable. (When a school is over 95% below Proficient, the exact percentage is not reported. Who wants to see 100% below Profiecent?) Now in 2023, these scores haven't changed. Today's report is 64% below Proficient in English (with only 36% Proficient, none Advanced), with the same 2023 over 95% below Proficient in math. These rock-bottom scores are unacceptable. For over 15 years I worked as district head of teaching and learning in varied Massachusetts districts,

and of 360 districts, only a tiny number, and in larger districts, come even close to this. There's no excuse for Providence, a relatively small urban district, to have test scores so low.

The Providence Teachers Union blocking many initiatives, under the guise of protecting teachers, is largely responsible for such low scores and must be reined in. Most egregiously, the PTU protects the jobs of grossly incompetent teachers who shouldn't be allowed in classrooms, went over the Commissioner of Education's head to go to the Governor for the current teachers' contract approval, and has ousted a good Hope principal in earlier years and ousted in 2019 the Superintendent and his assistant who were appointed by the current Commissioner of Education. Such gross outrageous union going beyond norms to get their way must stop, for the sake of students. We need laws to protect schools from the union running the Providence schools.

The low level of teaching and learning in Providence schools – which leads middle class families to pay exorbitant costs to attend the local private schools, or turn to the charter schools, or move to Barrington – is largely impacted by the Providence Teachers Union steadfastly balking at any change that would improve the schools.

The excellent current Commissioner of Education, Infante-Green, on a major issue, has been trying for years to require teacher training professional development for all teachers, as Massachusetts, and other states, have required for years. Massachusetts teachers comply with the Department of Education requirement to obtain professional development and stay current with teaching best practice. Would we want a doctor to do what doctors did twenty years ago?

When the Commissioner, in charge of Providence schools due to state takeover, attempted to negotiate with the current union contract for required teacher professional development, negotiations faltered. The union stood firm against requiring continued training. The PTU then went directly to the Governor, who understandably lacks understanding of nuances in public education, and seeks voter approval, handed the issue to an assistant and the teachers union got their way in all areas, including no requirement for teachers to have on-going professional development, keeping learning in the dark ages, with no stimulation to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In normal school districts, the union leadership meets with the district superintendent, and they negotiate and over time come to agreement. Our current excellent Commissioner, coming from New York state, where she was Assistant Commissioner, had attempted to bring Providence teachers to normal expectations, acting as head of the Providence

district because it was in state takeover due to low state test scores. The union brazenly ignored her leadership.

In normal school district union contract negotiations, the union leaders meet with the superintendent to resolve issues. Going over the head of the Commissioner to go to the Governor (who wants union votes) to get contract approval and keep schools behind is outrageous. While this is just one of the egregious union actions, this act alone should have been a crisis leading to a change in state law. No one, it seemed, noticed. The PTU has always gotten its way, including with teacher salary increases with no benefits that would help school improve, as often happens in contract negotiations, a two-way street. With the PTU, it's always one-way.

Teacher pay is another issue, a proposal that former PTU head Steven Smith and former Superintendent Sue Lusi make in their opinion piece "Call to Action: Union, Management Must Blow Up Providence's Broken School System" in "The 74" publication, Dec. 14, 2022. They raise the plight of teachers only getting a salary increase determined by years of service. This especially hurts teacher morale and lets teachers know all they have to do is show up and they'll get paid more. Some, even many, as we know from the Johns Hopkins report, don't even show up, and they continue to get paid. Usually in a school study district evaluators don't look at teacher absenteeism. In the Providence study by the Hopkins team they did, and found a large percentage of teachers absent over ten percent of the time, many absent even more. The report found over 30% of Providence teachers chronically absent. This has been all because the union allows this, protecting high teacher absenteeism.

With Providence struggling for substitute teachers, because school conditions are so bad, this means students are herded into a cafeteria, a holding spot, not a classroom, as reported in the Hopkins report. Further, incompetent teachers still hold their jobs when they should not be allowed in a classroom, affecting morale and how other teachers are undermined with no student behavior or learning standards, affecting the whole school. When bad apples are allowed in the classroom, the full school suffers, as former union head Steve Smith mentions in the opinion piece.

Regarding the salary issue that Lusi and Smith raise, if instead of protecting the poorest teachers, if teachers were given a supplemental stipend based on their students' RICAS scores, we'd see student learning and the quality of teaching spike up. When finally the current Commissioner was able to get required teacher training approved by the union, only for this year, in a miraculous deal, it was only because all Providence teachers would get paid for an extra half-hour of school, by use of Covid funds, with its last year this year. When under the Governor's purview the current union contract was approved,

every teacher who voted to approve the contract received $2,000, again unheard of for teachers to be paid to vote to approve a contract. Why then can't good teachers who help students learn and go all out for students get paid a stipend when their students' test scores increase? Other states do this. The union charges that merit pay would be subjective. If test scores demonstrate competence, and that teacher is rewarded, school culture would change, students would learn the good areas tested on the state test. Instead, in Providence, there's no incentive to teach your best; burn-out and malaise prevail among faculties. I hear this negativity about their jobs all the time from Providence teachers. Problems proliferate, due to the union blocking any attempt to improve schools and student learning. Even the ambitious high morale and love of students we're fortunate to have with the young, well-educated Brown student teachers and teachers is squelched when they see absent and marginally competent teachers getting paid high salaries.

I must add that the management side of the Providence schools must also be looked at, as Mr. Smith mentions in the opinion piece "Call to Action". When teachers feel they're being dictated to, they tend to resist. In the case of state testing, since it's a national test with tested areas developed by national subject area experts, and teachers are able to come up with their own ways of how to develop the learning, teachers have leeway here. While they're prescribed with good learning guides, federal expectations state they're free to determine *how* they teach. But not in Providence, where teachers are saddled with district-determined material, not their choice. The Providence central office has been leveling requirements that hinder rather than help learning. A few years ago, pre-covid, Providence teachers were required to have students use the Kahn Academy online math program with students, totally inappropriate for urban students. Teachers were bewildered that students were required to sit in front of a computer screen and just randomly tap keyboard keys till the program allowed them to move on to the next undecipherable question. A strong Hope Department Chair told me, "They're not learning anything."

Next, the good long-block class schedule that everyone loved in the high schools was abruptly changed to a seven-period rotating class time with briefer classes that even stymied teachers. No one in the schools knew why this new schedule was foisted on them, but I learned from visiting the central office that it was in response to a federal Office of Civil Rights violation. The new schedule allowed for double class periods of English Language learning for "Limited English Language Learners". But since Providence schools, especially Hope, had few qualified teachers of English as a Second Language, now termed Multi-Lingual Learners, having those double periods didn't mean

any student learned English better, often just shunted into a cafeteria, and it was just a bewildering new schedule that hurt learning for the rest of the school.

In the current year, Providence English teachers are required to use a new electronic computer system program that no one likes. If instead of constantly imposing ways to teach on Providence teachers there could be, as Steven Smith argues, a dialogue between teachers and what's termed the "downtown" administrators sitting in their quiet offices would have a chance to flourish. Inappropriate central office decisions on how to teach -- ignorant in the sense of not knowing the classroom situation and the students and teachers – leads teachers to distrust system-wide decisions, and turn to obey the union, because it protects them and seems to support them, while central office-required expectations seem out of body strange decision-making oblivious to student and teacher needs.

I could go on.

I propose a solution: In the mid-1980's, a Brown University professor and national school change leader Ted Sizer created a new program at Hope that worked miraculously well. We had just two long-block classes a day, in place of today's five classes a day, and only 50 students a day, instead of today's 100. A teacher of English, History, Math and Science all shared the same students, with school day time for these teachers to meet and confer. This was magical. We each cared about our shared students, and had the use of time that allowed us to think and plan. We weren't frazzled at the end of the day, running out the door, but voluntarily stayed after school to help our students. We taught just one course, not multiple courses. I taught 9th grade English, just one course for all our students. Students weren't tracked into different levels of learning, which we have today I Providence high schools. Hope was racially integrated. Students transferred from Classical to our program, where they saw teachers cared and learning was interesting and student-centered. I was able to team-teach with a history teacher, fun for us and for the students, to see the two courses melded. Teachers acted as advisers to students we had in our classes, unlike today. Our students soared in learning, but without data at the time that showed students learned, the program was shut down by a new superintendent.

Especially with today's learning loss due to covid era school shutdown, and high Providence student absenteeism, in part due to "remote learning," such more inventive programs are direly needed, to support teachers and students. Dropping electronic required programs on teachers only backfires in resistance and low morale. Maintaining

(and highly paying) teachers who shouldn't be in classrooms demoralizes all. Teachers just think, Doesn't anyone care?

There are better ways to work than what Providence has today. As Lusi and Smith state, a hard re-set is long overdue. If Providence shifted to a focus on improving the quality of student learning, it would be revolutionary, and bring education equity, social mobility, and lifelong learning to Providence students. They wouldn't be clamoring to get into the small charter schools. Millions are now being spent on building repairs. Why not pay the best of the best a bit extra and improve student learning?

I earned degrees from The American University School of International Service in Washington, DC; Masters in Teaching English, Brown University; graduate degree, Harvard Graduate School of Education; and doctorate, the School of Education, Boston University. I taught for over 25 years at Hope High School, Providence, and for 8 years concurrently served as Brown Education Department clinical professor teaching Methods of Teaching. I then moved to Massachusetts school district leader as Assistant Superintendent and district Curriculum Director for teaching and learning in varied districts, helping guide the first wave of new state standards and tests initiated in the Reagan presidency and implemented in the Clinton era of new accountability legislation and through George W. Bush's ambitious and much-reviled No Child Left Behind era, followed by the Obama administration's less stringent approach to standards and testing. I now support teachers in online courses in helping to fulfill the promise of no child left behind.
I'm author, "Standards Matter," Montgomery, Ala.: NewSouth Books, 2015, and "Renegade Teacher: Inside School Walls with Standards and the Test," which explains how testing helps boost student learning. Luminare Press, 2023

November 1, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/2223?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/11.1/Anderson%20Paper%207-29%20Final.pdf

Jo Anderson – Paper

Meeting Summary

This meeting started a series of three meetings that had expert presentations from nine individuals who have specific content knowledge in the education field. The first and only person to present at this meeting was Jo Anderson. Mr. Anderson works for the Collaborative Leadership Consulting Group (CLCG). Mr. Anderson leads most of his presentation based on a paper he wrote and provided to all commission members. This paper discusses *Leading, Organizing and Engaging Members Through a Comprehensive Teachers Union.* This paper addresses a variety of ideas for best practices in teaching union frameworks. Mr. Anderson discusses three different forms of unionism in his writing, these being industrial, professional, and social justice. Industrial unionism has been considered to have a limited view, while the other options are more broad options. Mr. Anderson believes a combination of all three of these frameworks are best procedure. This is what he calls a "Comprehensive Teacher Unionism." Historically, teacher unions have followed and industrial union frame that did not allow them to become a vehicle for professionalization. An open dialogue began with Senator Zurier asking a few questions. Notable dialogue includes the following; Mr. Anderson's working relationship with Al Shanker (former president AFT), peer assistance and review, Toledo Federation of Teachers, changing our approach to collective bargaining, the Hope High School "essential" initiative, and innovation zones. Chairman Zurier wrapped the meeting and announced the next meeting would be held on November 7th at 5:00pm.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, November 1, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Jo Anderson Jr. - Consortium for Educational Change (CEC)
III. Adjournment

This meeting will not be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Leading, Organizing & Engaging Members Through a Comprehensive Teachers Union

Jo Anderson, Jr.
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Too often teachers and especially their unions are perceived as chiefly interested in "bread and butter" issues such as better pay and benefits and job security and not really concerned about larger issues like the quality of teaching and learning and the social justice concern that all students have an equitable opportunity for a quality education. We can call this limited view industrial unionism. A more encompassing framework would include professional unionism and social justice unionism as well as industrial unionism. I call this Framework: Comprehensive Teacher Unionism.

There is a rich and long history of professional unionism that goes back to the Medieval Guilds. Modern day craft or trade unions are in this tradition. Current craft unions have power over and responsibility for issues of quality including control of apprenticeship programs and entrance to the craft. On the other hand, industrial unionism has a different and more recent history going back to the organizing of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the early part of the 20th century. The 1935 Wagner Act codified this industrial unionism. As described by Barry and Irving Bluestone in their book, *Negotiating the Future*, in the 1950's, this industrial unionism approach got limited to strictly dealing with "bread and butter" and security issues (Bluestone 1992). In this model, concerns about the nature and quality of the work are the exclusive province of management and are considered "management rights."

Historically, teacher unions have followed an industrial union frame that did not allow them to become a vehicle for professionalization. The industrial frame approach indicates that the purpose of the union is limited to bread and butter, and security issues such as fair treatment and just cause. In this model, concerns about the nature and quality of the work of teaching and learning are the province of management, and management rights.
In the beginning of organizing the teacher unions and fighting for collective bargaining, many teacher union organizers aspired to more than just the industrial frame. However, the stance from management and policy makers and the prevalence of the industrial frame, especially in relation to collective bargaining and private sector labor law, forced most teacher unions into this industrial frame. Over time, union leaders and staff became used to these limitations. In fact, some union leaders even embraced them.

Early efforts to secure collective bargaining in the 1960's and 70's involved an interest on the part of many teacher union leaders to secure voice in decision-making about the nature and the quality of the profession's work. School management pushback was successful in most places to defeat these interests and impose the private sector industrial frame on the collective bargaining process at the local district level and in the language of state statutes governing collective bargaining for teachers. In many states, there are no state laws allowing collective bargaining for teachers. In fact, in some states collective bargaining for teachers is expressly prohibited. In such states, teachers have limited or no venues for collective voice and presence. It is hard to be a true profession without such collective voice and presence.

This resistance to teacher voice and collective professionalism in the early 1970's was something I experienced directly. I began work for the Illinois Education Association (IEA), the NEA affiliate in Illinois, in the Fall of 1972 as a field organizer. My first strike or job action, actually a "Blue Flu," was in the Fall of 1973. We had already settled salary and other economic issues. The main outstanding issue was teacher voice in decision-making. We were told by management and the school board that teachers had no right to such collective voice. This violated my basic sense of my calling to this work.

Let me share how I came to this work with the teachers' union and my own personal journey. I grew up in a traditional Catholic family in New England. I went to parochial schools from 1st grade through a Jesuit University, Boston College. Living as a young person in the Catholic Church in the 50's was like growing up in the Middle Ages. It was all about one's quest for personal salvation through right living in this world to earn salvation in the next.

When I entered Boston College in 1962, my plan was to become a Jesuit priest. That quickly changed. The Second Vatican Council began to make significant changes in the Catholic Church, an "*aggiornamento*" as Pope John the XXIII called it, an opening of the windows to fresh air and new ideas. I was majoring in philosophy and very open to new ideas. I was unwilling to be restricted in my thinking to traditional Thomism. I was greatly influenced by two particular books. Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* with his notion of paradigms and paradigm shift revolutionized my thinking (Kuhn 1962). I began to realize that we all have paradigms or interpretations of the world but not the actual truth. The other book was Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man* (Teilhard de Chardin 1955). This book described a theology of evolution, that salvation was not an individual journey from this world to some other better place but rather the quest within history to make this world a better place.

I became very involved in ecumenical dialogue and in the Civil Rights movement. In the summer of 1964, I was involved in a project to deal with sub-standard housing in Roxbury, Massachusetts. In the summer of 1965, I was involved in another project in inner-city Detroit to set up a Freedom School. A professor and mentor of mine at Boston College encouraged me to look into graduate work at the University of Chicago in a program called The Committee on Social Thought to pursue my developing interest and commitment to social change.

The mid-1960's was a time of great ferment and being at the University of Chicago put me right in the middle of it. I continued to be involved in Civil Rights work and also became involved in the Anti-Vietnam War movement. I became increasingly interested in politics and political action. I had been very impressed with the early work of the Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, and particularly taken with the concept of participatory democracy that they described in *The Port Huron Statement* (1962, 7-8). This approach to politics made a great deal of sense to me. But the evolution of the Anti-War movement and the morphing of SDS into groups like the Weathermen made me very uncomfortable and did not align with my emerging sense of politics.

It was my great good fortune that at this same time, during my 5 years with The Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, I got to study with Hannah Arendt. She connected me with a tradition of politics in the West and a very different approach to political action. In studying the Greeks and Thucydides, Machiavelli, *The Federalist Papers*, and Arendt's own work especially *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution*, I found a different way to act in the world. For Arendt, politics was a process of people coming together to create power together and working through their different views and interests to forge a way forward. It was not a process of forcing often through violence an ideology on one's opponents. Some of the New Left at the time was beginning to advocate and practice violence as evidenced in the Days of Rage.

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt described how the Greeks created the "polis" or public space where human beings came together and appeared to one another in a new way to develop policy and a program of action, a merging of word and deed, to act into the world (Arendt 1958). In *On Revolution*, she describes how the U.S. Founding Fathers completed the revolution with a process of Constitution-making which created the public spaces for ongoing political action (Arendt 1963). It was Hannah Arendt who suggested that I seek out Saul Alinsky. I was becoming lost in the works of philosophers like Kant and Hegel, and she knew that I was ultimately interested in the world of action, not Academia.

I began working with Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation Training Institute for Organizers in the Fall of 1971. I discovered that Arendt's way of thinking about politics

and Alinsky's way of doing politics were very much aligned. The fundamental approach was to empower people to create and enter public spaces to act into their world, participatory democracy with a small "d."

I found my vocation as an organizer, which is the art of developing public relationships with and among others for the purposes of power to impact policy and change the world. Max Weber wrote an essay entitled "Politics as a Vocation" (Weber 1946). This fits with my sense of organizing as a vocation. I have seen myself as an organizer in every job I have had over the course of my career.

I spent 9 years in a training relationship with The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). The IAF had a consulting relationship with both the NEA and the IEA. This is how I came to work for IEA, the teachers' union, in 1972. The IEA was just in the beginning of the struggle to create a union. In my view, the work involved creating a workers' democracy.

The organizing of the teachers' union in Illinois was a battle for the next decade, definitely an adversarial process of organizing and fighting for a place at the district and school policy-making table. I was involved in organizing 2 multi-local organizations called Unified Bargaining Councils during this time. A local union represented teachers in a single school district. The Unified Bargaining Council was an effort to coordinate and integrate the bargaining across multiple school districts. We had founding conventions to create new public spaces to develop communication amongst these locals in their common struggle and to make and keep promises to one another around their bargaining objectives. Hannah Arendt said, "the making and keeping of promises, ... in the realm of politics, may well be the highest human faculty" (Arendt 1963, 175).

By the early 1980's, many locals in Illinois had gained sufficient political power to be accepted as entities that administrators and school boards found they had to deal with albeit begrudgingly. The union was not going to go away. On the other hand, relationships in schools between administrators and teachers were often like armed camps and very adversarial. No way for adults to live and certainly not good for students. It was time to find a different way, organizing in a different key, a more collaborative approach. We had created an industrial union but hardly a professional one.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Al Shanker began to reassert these notions of professional unionism in the mid 1980's. He was partly influenced by the work of Dal Lawrence and the Toledo Federation of Teachers which started the first peer review program in the country, a program where the union takes responsibility for supporting and evaluating new teachers and for ultimately deciding with management whether these new teachers should be retained or let go. Dal Lawrence was a colleague of mine for many years,

and in a conversation I had with him, he indicated that Al Shanker had asked him to present his work in Toledo to the AFT Executive Council.

The work in Toledo as well as the work on new approaches to teacher evaluation in three other districts was profiled in a Rand Corporation Report in 1984 entitled "Teacher Evaluation, A Study of Effective practices." This report suggested that teacher unions adopt a new approach to teacher unionism:

> "In such districts as Toledo, where organized teachers participate in the definition of teaching and in decisions about the membership in the profession, our study found the evolution of yet a higher stage in labor relations that goes beyond negotiated policy to *negotiated responsibility* as the basis of school district operations. Negotiated responsibility provides the basis for a collective professionalism more potent than the individual professionalism that existed when unorganized teachers had only permissive authority over the substance of their work." (Wise et al. 1984, 78-79)

The Carnegie Report in 1986 argued for turning teaching into a genuine profession and in turn suggested a new relationship between unions and school districts. "Unions, boards, and school administrators need to work out a new accommodation based on exchanging professional level salaries and a professional environment, on the one hand, for the acceptance of professional standards of excellence and the willingness to be held fully accountable for the results of one's work, on the other." (A Nation Prepared 1986, 128) Both the AFT President and the NEA President were on the panel that authored and signed the Carnegie Report.

From the late 1980's, there have been a number of examples and efforts to expand the more limited definition of industrial unionism to include the characteristics of professional unionism and social justice unionism. The National Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN) and the subsequent Regional TURN Networks (www.turnweb.org) have been promoting and experimenting with professional union activities. These have included collaborative partnerships with administration, school boards and local communities to improve teaching and learning for all students. There are many local examples across the country of this kind of innovative labor-management collaboration to improve teaching and learning, where the groups work together and advocate for the equitable treatment of all students (National TURN 2022).

My own work in Illinois followed a similar path. In the mid-1980's we had an opportunity to change our approach to collective bargaining. An outside consultant provided a process called Win-Win negotiations to a few districts. Rather than get defensive and get excluded,

some IEA staff participated in the process. We learned that there was some real potential in this alternate approach.

Changing our approach to bargaining as a starting point made a great deal of sense because that is how our locals attached or connected most directly to our school districts. Traditional bargaining was also a source of quite a bit of the conflict with districts. We were able to integrate the theory of the Harvard Negotiations Project's *Getting to Yes* with some of the processes we had learned from the outside consultant (Fisher 1981). We also developed teams of facilitators which included an IEA staff person and an administrator or school board attorney. As more and more districts tried this approach, the results were similar. The substance of the negotiated agreements was as good if not a little better than the results in traditional bargaining. But the communication between the parties was markedly improved and people were beginning to develop good working relationships and some trust.

A number of teacher union leaders and superintendents and school board members involved in this interest-based bargaining approach asked how they could continue the process of building good working relationships day in and day out without waiting for the next contract bargaining in a few years. This led to organizing the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC), a network of districts involving union leaders, administrators, and school board members working together to improve relationships with the ultimate objective of improving student learning.

For over 30 years, CEC has been involved in a learning journey to develop support for districts and their schools working through labor-management collaboration to improve systems to improve learning for all students. In the process, IEA and its locals have been learning how to become more comprehensive teacher unions. In this context, union organizing transforms from adversarial organizing to get a seat at the policy-making table to the organizing of labor-management collaboration for the purposes of transforming how school districts function.

Glenview, IL, was an early example of this CEC work. During the 1988-1989 school year, the union and district administration and school board through a strategic bargaining process transformed their traditional contract into a Constitution. A traditional contract consists of a set of work rules that essentially constrain the rights of management to act unilaterally. These work rules are often backward facing in that they attempt to develop language to deal with problems that happened in the past. Such work rules seldom create shared power. Contractual provisions around class size limits are an example of work rules that limit management authority but do not really share policy-making authority with teachers and their unions around what happens in classrooms.

The Glenview Constitution was very different. It created shared decision-making structures at the district and school levels, essentially public spaces for empowerment and ongoing decision-making. It was very clear that the Constitution articulated a partnership between the community as represented through the school board and the administration and the profession as represented by the teachers' union. In the book *United Mind Workers, Unions and Teaching in the Knowledge Society* by Kerchner, Koppich, and Weeres, the Glenview Constitution is the most cited example of a new approach to professional unionism (Kerchner et al. 1997).

The work of CEC over the years has supported districts and their unions in creating ongoing shared decision-making structures at the district and school levels. Through this work, unions become partners with districts in transforming systems into learning organizations that are working to continuously improve student learning. Unions are becoming comprehensive in their purpose and work by integrating the three frames of unionism: industrial, professional, and social justice unionism.

In the last 10-15 years, these collaborative labor-management efforts have begun to touch more directly the work of transforming the profession from individual, privatized practice to more collective and public professional practice or professional learning communities. In my view, this work still has a long way to go in many districts. Teachers are not used to practicing in public with each other, and the whole system of district and schools is designed to prevent it. We will get to these systemic barriers in a moment. But professional learning communities or communities of practice are not an end in themselves. They serve to promote student learning, and student learning is also most effective when done in community with other students and adults. I have done a lot of work over the years to promote labor-management collaboration in the U-46, Elgin School District, the second largest district in Illinois. This District is now working intentionally with outside coaching and support to "achieve social, emotional, and cognitive learning in every classroom through academic teaming." They are working to unleash *The Power of Student Teams* (Toth 2019). They are working to use the adult collaborative structures they have built over the years to advance this purpose of building structures of collaboration, public spaces, among students. I think this purpose was well articulated over a hundred years ago by Francis W. Parker when he said a school "should be a model home, a complete community, an embryonic democracy" (Parker).

Over the years and especially in my time as a Senior Advisor to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, colleagues would frequently ask for some evidence that labor-management collaboration can indeed lead to improving learning for all students. Fortunately, there is now research that documents this potential impact. Saul Rubinstein at Rutgers and John

McCarthy at Cornell have published research that documents that labor-management collaboration at the district level that focuses on supporting and improving such collaboration at the school level that in turn supports and improves collaboration among teachers around their practice does in fact improve student learning as well as other system improvements including retaining teachers at high need schools (Rubinstein 2016).

In the rest of this paper, I want to explore what this expanded Comprehensive Framework for Teacher Unionism entails and why it is so difficult given the systemic barriers in place. Union organizing through this lens of Comprehensive Teacher Unionism becomes organizing for systems transformation.

The purpose of a union is to be a vehicle for meeting the needs, interests, and aspirations of its members. By organizing and banding together, the union's strength in numbers provides more power and effectiveness beyond what individuals could accomplish themselves. Stephen Covey describes in his work that there are four basic human needs:

- To live
- To love
- To learn
- To leave a legacy (Covey 1992).

Those needs can be translated for the teacher union members.

- To live = the need for a decent salary and benefits and fair treatment.
- To love = the need to be in relationship with colleagues and to have a sense of belonging in one's work.
- To learn = the need to continuously grow and learn in one's practice.
- To leave a legacy = the need to make a difference in all students' lives.

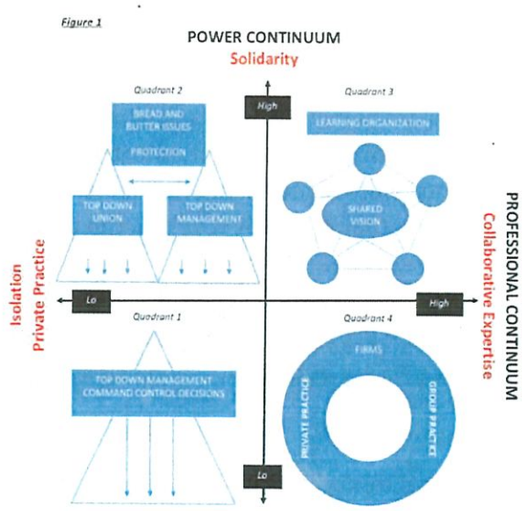
It is the need to leave a legacy where the teaching profession derives its moral purpose through making a difference in the lives of students. When the union serves as a conduit for teachers to collectively impact and improve the lives of all students, then the union exists for more than just the needs of its own members - it also exists for the benefit of students.

In order to improve the lives of all students, especially those impacted by poverty, the Comprehensive Union will develop an array of community organizing and political organizing strategies to improve the circumstances in which many students live. The union, along with community partners, will be a vehicle to organize around the social justice issues that impact the lives of their students and families.

The union also will be a vehicle for transforming teaching into a profession that will improve learning for all students within schools. The rest of this paper will focus on that journey. However, that focus is not intended to under-emphasize the social justice aspects of a Comprehensive Union. This moral purpose is at the heart of what it means to be a profession. The Latin roots of the word "profession" mean to put forth a belief, to stand for something, literally a profession of faith. As an organized group, a profession is a collective whole that has a set of standards around good practice in the service of and toward the betterment of its clients. The organized group is committed to training and supporting its members in living out of those standards. The profession takes responsibility for ensuring that happens and also has a commitment to continuously improve its collective practice over time. If teaching is to become a profession and live out its moral purpose, then the union can be the vehicle for organized teachers to make that a reality. This is exactly what The Rand Report argued for when it called for "collective professionalism." (Wise et al. 1984, 78).

To move beyond the narrow industrial frame and become a true profession with moral purpose, teacher unions need to pursue a professional continuum as well as a power continuum. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1
The Unionization Matrix



Prior to organizing into a union, teachers in public education lived at the bottom of a top-down, command-control, bureaucratic system. Patrick Dolan best describes the nature of this existence through the illustration in Quadrant 1 within Figure 1 (Dolan 1994). Teachers are defenseless against the demands coming from the top down, even when these

demands are arbitrary and capricious. Teachers are also isolated in their practice, working in a privatized practice world behind closed doors with very little useful feedback and opportunities to improve in their practice. There are no public spaces in which to be seen and heard.

The vertical axis in Figure 1 represents the power continuum, the journey of collectively organizing for power to provide a counterforce to the top down bureaucratic system. In effect, as shown in Quadrant 2, the union becomes its own top-down, command-control, bureaucratic system against the system in place. The purpose is to put forth an adversarial stance in order to protect its members from arbitrary and capricious treatment and to collectively bargain for better salaries, benefits, and fair treatment. This is essentially the Industrial Model borrowed from private sector industrial unionism. The hallmark of the relationships amongst unionized teachers is solidarity, and any attempt to distinguish teachers from one another around their practice is considered to be a threat to the power of solidarity. Teachers remain isolated in their practice in this model.

In my experience, this solidarity really manifests itself when teachers take collective action, such as in a strike. They come together and experience each other in a new way, often saying that for the first time they feel like a faculty, a collective with real power over their circumstances. An example for me was a strike in 1983 in a school district west of Chicago. There were continual meetings and convenings to determine the next steps in strategy. Public spaces emerged and teachers appeared to one another in new ways. This particular strike ended when the teachers decided to settle after trying to change the composition of the school board with some write-in candidates and falling short of having a new majority on the school board. The financial settlement was less than ideal but the experience of coming together and creating new power together constituted the victory. In the next few weeks after the strike, teams of teachers went up and down the valley sharing their story of collective action with colleagues in other districts. It was in the telling of the story that they captured the victory and what Arendt calls "the specific revelatory quality of action and speech" (Arendt 1958, 186). They revealed themselves to one another as a faculty, a collective professional presence. The problem even tragedy here is that to become faculty, the teachers had to take collective action outside of school, away from the work of teaching and learning.

What has happened to the union on this adversarial continuum is also problematic. It has become itself a top-down, command control, bureaucratic system. The public space for rank and file teacher action becomes severely reduced. In its place, leaders and staff of the union take action or perform services on behalf of their members. This is very much like what Peter Senge in the *Fifth Discipline* called the "Shifting the Burden" archetype. In the short-term, the union elects leaders or hires staff to fight teachers' battles for them because

the teachers themselves are too weak and dependent on the management in the top-down system to fight for themselves. The problem is that over time, the teachers are still dependent and weak but they have shifted their dependency to the union gladiators fighting their battles for them. "The phenomenon of short-term improvements leading to long-term dependency is so common, it has its own name among systems thinkers—it's called 'Shifting the Burden to the Intervenor'" (Senge 2006, 61).

The horizontal axis in Figure 1 represents the professional continuum and the journey from isolated, privatized practice to "collaborative expertise," using the language of John Hattie and Michael Fullan (Fullan 2015). This collaborative expertise is the building of professional capital as described by Fullan and Hargreaves (Fullan 2012). This professional capital not only involves human capital or individual capacity, but also social capital ... the power of the group as a continuously improving community of practice. Professional capital also involves decisional capital, the individual and collective judgment that is informed by data and grows out of collective expertise. Relationships among practitioners are much more horizontal and dense where individual differences in expertise are promoted and allowed to flourish, as well as shared for the benefit of the continuous learning of the group. The interlocking circles in Quadrant 3 depict this organizational state. What holds the group together is not coercion from above but the power of a shared or common vision. This is a new public space for teachers to be seen and appear to one another and become a genuine profession, independent and inter-dependent.

Quadrant 4 represents groups of professionals in private professional practice, groups like law firms or medical group practices or the Danielson Group in education. Law and medicine have developed high degrees of professional practice and standing compared to teaching. The interesting phenomenon is when groups of lawyers or doctors go to work for large bureaucracies, they often unionize but bring their professional cultures with them to some extent.

The real journey for teaching is to move from Quadrant 2 to Quadrant 3. Important to emphasize here is that this move maintains the collective power of Quadrant 2 but deploys it in different and collaborative ways. For example, in the area of collective bargaining, it means moving away from adversarial or positional bargaining toward interest-based, collaborative bargaining.

This journey involves not just transforming the union but also transforming the system of public education. It means moving from top-down, command-control bureaucracies to organic and responsive, continuously improving and innovating, learning organizations. Teacher unions cannot do that by themselves. They need management partners within the system of public education and the community partners who own these public systems.

Dolan described the top down, command and control system as having four pathologies. (Dolan 1994, 30-41). (See Figure 2).

Figure 2
Dolan's Four Pathologies

The first pathology has to do with top-down control. The system is strongly committed to controlling people and their actions and imposing order, keeping things the same and standardized. It has very limited capacity for change and innovation.

The second pathology centers on information and its flow within the system. Information is highly guarded, fragmented, and sectioned in siloes of expertise. Information does not travel well, especially from the bottom up or across the system. This makes it very hard for the system to understand its changing environment and adapt to it.

The third pathology is around relationships among people. With hierarchical drops in the system and fragmentation, the relationships center on the power over others and competition with others. There is isolation from others, and very few relationships, especially at the bottom. This breeds fear, very little trust, and lack of openness. Learning in the system is very difficult. Public space for collective professional action is almost non-existent.

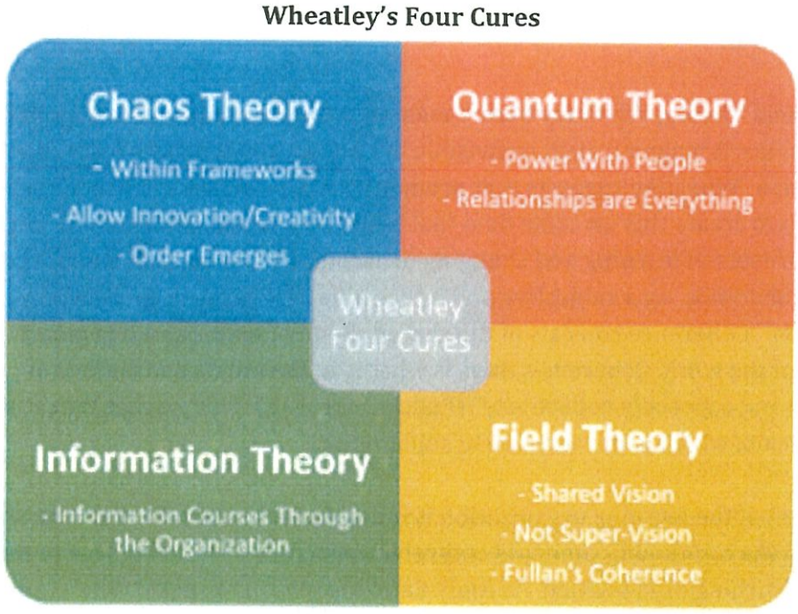
The fourth pathology is around people's motivation. The system does not trust people to have the internal motivation to do the right thing and therefore puts external systems of supervision in place with emphasis on carrots and sticks to get people to do what the

system wants them to do. This severely limits individual and collective enthusiasm and creativity and action around the work of the system.

These pathologies prevent the top-down, command-control system from becoming an adaptive and responsive learning organization. Teaching as a profession cannot grow in such a system. The union as a vehicle for professionalization has to find strategies, with partners, to transform this system into a learning organization. Again, union organizing, at least organizing a Comprehensive Teachers Union, now becomes organizing labor-management collaboration to transform systems into learning organizations.

A number of systems thinkers and writers like Peter Senge and Margaret Wheatley have described in powerful ways what the new learning organization looks like. Margaret Wheatley does this in a way that mirrors Dolan's pathologies. In her book, *Leadership and the New Science,* Wheatley suggests some cures or antidotes to Dolan's four pathologies. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3
Wheatley's Four Cures



She looks to some of the breakthroughs in science and its emerging understanding of the natural world as metaphors for what we need to do to transform bureaucracies into learning organizations or at least what learning organizations look like on the other side (Wheatley 2006).

In Chaos Theory, Wheatley sees a way to counter the top-down, command-control system. Just as even chaos has patterns to it, she suggests that an organization can establish some

overall patterns or parameters for action and then promote a lot of autonomy and innovation within these parameters. In this system, order and reordering emerges, rather than being imposed. This empowers people on the ground of the system to act and interact to create new possibilities.

In Information Theory, she sees a way to free up the organization so that information courses freely throughout the organization. Bringing people together across siloes and out of their isolation creates new relationships and new information, new public spaces for word and action.

In Quantum Physics, she finds a metaphor for relationships and bringing people together. At the very minute, subatomic scale of the universe, Quantum Theory finds there are relationships instead of discrete, separate particles. At this level, one particle can only be found and defined in its relationship to another particle. She suggests that in learning organizations, we need to develop not so much relationships of power over but instead power with one another. This unleashes far more synergy, power, creativity, and collaboration. I think this power in relationships is very much like Hannah Arendt's notion of political power.

Finally, in Field Theory, Wheatley finds a metaphor for how to promote internal motivation in organizations. A magnetic field is invisible but an extremely strong force that holds things together. Wheatley suggests that promoting shared vision is a way for a learning organization to create this invisible field that holds people and the organization together in a dynamic process of learning and changing to accomplish its mission and purpose. Fullan's notion of "Coherence" as a subjective and inter-subjective process gets at the meaning of shared vision. "Coherence consists of the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work. Coherence, then, is what is in the minds and actions of people individually and especially collectively" (Fullan 2015, 1-2). This is what Wheatley describes as shared vision, which is the antidote to supervision.

But the vision of the learning organization is much easier to describe than the strategy for getting from the top-down, command control bureaucratic system in place to the new system of a learning organization. As Andy Caulkins says in his post "Why Transforming Public Education Is So Damn Hard: "That's what we've all inherited in our public education system: a completely self-reinforcing, relentlessly self-repeating closed system" (Caulkins). That is the problem. We are not organizing in a vacuum. There is an entrenched system in place. As Saul Alinsky said, "The first step in community organization is community disorganization" (Alinsky 1989, 116). W. Patrick Dolan had a deep understanding of what we were dealing with in school systems, what he called the system in place or the "Steady State. "If I were writing in German, I would be able to invent a new word to describe this

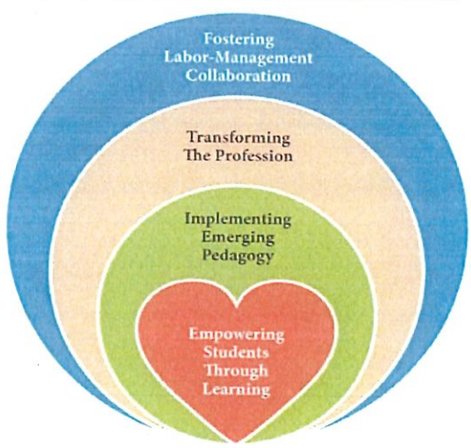
phenomenon. I would call it the System-In-Place Over-Against-Which-You Start. That is no small presenting problem.... What's more the system-in-place will actively resist change – and with a certain ferocity to boot. There is a fundamental, relational, and intellectual consistency in every system that translates into a powerful drive to retain its equilibrium. It is in a 'Steady State' and needs to stay put" (Dolan 1994, 5).

In the early days of organizing CEC, in the late 1980's, we met Pat Dolan. We had an intuitive sense of what our strategy needed to be. He gave us the systems thinking frame and analysis that made our work much more robust. We became partners for the next 30 years in a learning journey to transform the Steady State into a learning organization working in districts and schools across the country.

Let me share our learnings over this 30 year period and suggest a Framework for Change and a Pathway that provide a way for teachers unions to work with partners in districts and communities to transform bureaucratic systems into learning organizations. This is a critical part of the process to turn the union into a vehicle for the transformation of the teaching profession. Over the last 9 years, this has been very much the organizing strategy we have developed and continue to implement working in partnership with the Rockford Public Schools and the Rockford Education Association, the third largest school district in Illinois.

This Framework for Change begins with "The Why" the work is important, giving purpose and meaning to the work from the "Inside-Out." It articulates the moral purpose that also informs the work of the union as vehicle for transforming the profession. In effect, it articulates a logic model for the work. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4
The Framework for Transformation



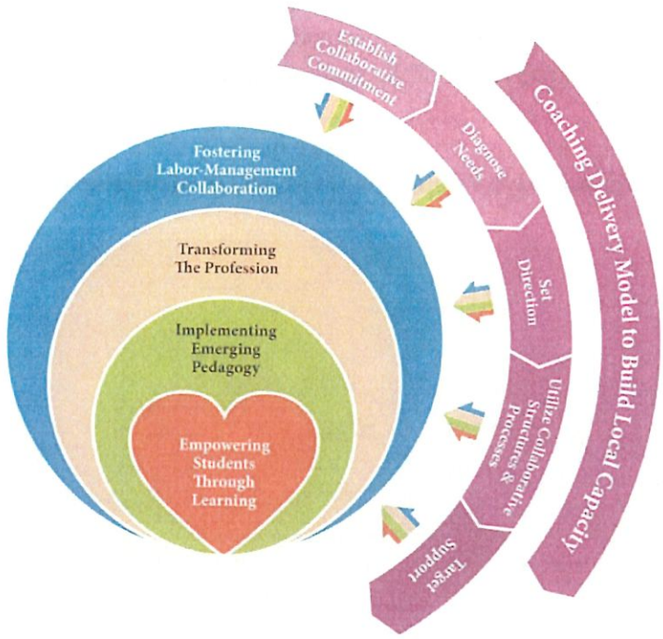
This Inside-Out Framework begins with "Empowering Students Through Learning," which is the heart of the work. Michael Fullan describes this as "Deep Learning" and describes it as follows: "Deep learning is the process of acquiring these six global competencies: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. These competencies encompass compassion, empathy, socio-emotional learning, entrepreneurialism, and related skills required for high functioning in a complex universe." (Fullan 2018, 16) Collaboration and citizenship in particular capture the kind of public spaces and embryonic democracy that begin to empower students as political beings.

To provide students with the learning experiences they need to be able to work, live, and thrive in the 21st century global world, schools need to "Implement an Emerging Pedagogy" that engages students actively in their learning to think critically, problem solve, develop creativity, and work collaboratively with others. This emerging pedagogy is a big lift for many teachers and leaders.

Such a lift requires "Transforming the Profession," specifically transforming how teaching is organized, providing opportunities for the development of professional capital, including human, social, and decisional capital. This type of major system change -- moving from isolated, privatized practice to communities of practice, public spaces -- requires "Labor-Management Collaboration," beginning with fundamental changes in how teacher unions and school management relate so that they can collaboratively redesign the current systems (contracts, administrative procedures, board policies, etc.) to empower the teaching and learning process.

This Framework for Change then moves from "The Why" to "The How," which describes how the organization collaboratively builds capacity from the "Outside-In." The inner arc in Figure 5 describes this Pathway. (See Figure 5).

Figure 5
The Pathway to Transformation



The Pathway begins with a "Collaborative Commitment" among the three anchors (teacher's union, superintendent/administration, school board) to work together and build the collaborative relationships needed to transform the system in place. It is not expected that people already know how to work well together. However, it is a requirement that they have the disposition and commitment to learn and try to work well together. Rockford started here.

The second step in the Pathway is a process of "Diagnosing Needs." There are a variety of ways districts and schools can do this including the following:

1. Dolan's Boundary Audit of relationships
2. A System Assessment process that is in-depth and based on the Baldrige Criteria and the DuFour Professional Learning Community (PLC) framework, including the three focus areas of learning, collaboration, and results (Baldridge Framework, December 13, 2022; DuFour 2008).

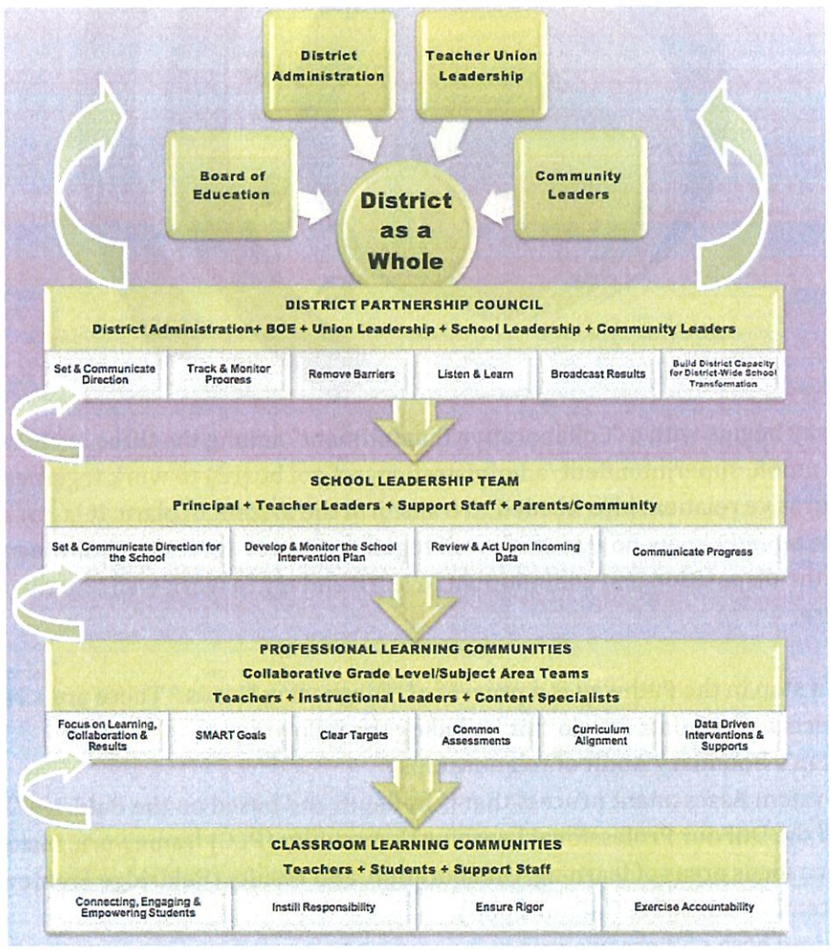
Rockford used both of these processes.

The third step is about "Setting Direction." While there are a variety of ways to do this, one of the most effective and comprehensive ways is an in-depth strategic planning process, which engages multiple stakeholders in a months long journey that typically leads to an

ongoing process of strategic action planning and implementation. Again, Rockford took this step as well.

The fourth step involves "Utilizing collaborative structures and processes (public spaces)" to do the work at the various levels of the system: district, school, PLC, and student teams. (See Figure 6)

Figure 6
Collaborative Public Spaces at All Levels of the System



The diagram in Figure 6 maps out the structural interventions that provide the containers for joint collaborative work to empower teams at the school and classroom levels, and to then do the ongoing listening and learning throughout the system (bottom up, top down and across) to identify and share breakthroughs and to remove barriers.

Listening and learning may be one of the most powerful change strategies and also one of the most difficult to organize. In Rockford, it took 2 to 3 years to organize a District Leadership Team (DLT) and then another couple of years for the DLT to home in on the strategy of really listening and learning to what is happening in the system. People want to act, and listening and learning do not seem like acting, but in reality, when the different pieces of the system are gathered together in a single container, they bring new information and new learning that allows the system to see itself and remove barriers and to move to new levels of possibility.

The fifth step involves "Targeted support" that matches effective, research-based practices to specific district and school needs. One of the most effective ways of doing this is through an external ongoing coaching process that is designed to build continuing coaching and capacity building inside the system of districts and schools. Coaching is what organizing looks like in this context: an external intervention to provide the capacity building within the system to move people from dependence to independence and inter-dependence.

This Framework for Change and Pathway provide the larger context for the particular work of the union to:

- become a vehicle for transforming the profession from individual, privatized practice to collective, public practice
- become a Comprehensive Union responsive to all four levels of needs, interests, and aspirations of its members
- define and live its moral purpose

The Rockford Education Association is on this journey of becoming a Comprehensive Teachers Union. Such a Comprehensive Teachers Union will over time align the following systems with this moral purpose of becoming a profession that meets the needs of all students:

- shared and distributed leadership systems
- strategic planning and execution (aligned with District plans, state and national teacher union plans, and other unions in the community)
- member relationships (processes and structures to recruit, support, develop, and communicate with members)
- partnerships and processes to define the work, and describe the how and the what of the work (collective bargaining is one of these processes)
- data and information systems to monitor and track progress and results (including the financial health of the local) and continuously improve union systems

The work in Rockford is still a work in progress. We would all be the first to admit that there is still a long way to go. In fact from our experiences working in a number of districts as well as Rockford, the Pathway to Transformation is nowhere near as robust as it needs to be to overcome the inertia, the "stuckness," of Dolan's Steady State. Let me suggest some of the barriers that get in the way of transformation to a Learning Organization and to a Comprehensive Teachers Union.

Collaboration often starts at the top of the system with district leaders and union leaders. They begin to transform their relationships from adversarial to collaborative. They jointly communicate with the rest of the system that they are working together in new and collaborative ways. On the other hand, in some if not many of the schools, administration still acts out of a top down mindset and teachers do not experience this collaboration supposedly happening at the district level. Teachers then will turn on their leaders and press them to become adversarial and fight for them. Union leaders will push the superintendent or other top central office staff to come down on their principals and change their behavior. In some cases, the central office staff actually supervising the principals act in a top down way and actually foster the same top down behavior in the principals. If this pattern persists for too long the union leaders are in danger of being unelected by their angry members.

Top administrators and union leaders at the district level need a strategy to jointly train their principals and union reps at the school level in new ways of seeing their roles and give them new tools for working together. As one superintendent put it, to become principals and union reps, individuals need to have the same "table stakes" in terms of mindset and skill set to take on these roles. This is both a recruitment and a training issue for management and union leadership and requires time and resources. The Elgin and Rockford School Districts have entered into a partnership with Northern Illinois University to recruit and train new principals in a program modeled after the nationally recognized partnership between the Chicago Public Schools and the University of Illinois at Chicago that involves a full-time residency (Tozer 2023).

Collective, public practice among teachers is also very difficult. Professional Learning Communities are a strategy meant to bring about this collective efficacy. But PLCs have gotten a bad reputation with teachers as administrators have often not trusted teachers to work together on the right things and have commandeered PLC time and dictated how teachers should spend this time. This increases teacher resentment and alienation. In turn teachers are not used to working together and sometimes do not want to work together. At the high school level, this is often not how they see their work. At the elementary level, teachers are resistant to adding time to their schedules and day which often feel overwhelming already. Teachers need support and training on how to work and learn

together in new ways. This is what the Elgin School District is trying to provide through their work with Michael Toth and his organization Instructional Empowerment.

Compounding these issues are changes in leadership, both superintendents and union leaders. Holding the course becomes very difficult. We do have experience in places like Elgin and Rockford where they have longstanding collaborative structures in place at the district and school levels, and even with changes in leadership, these structures and the resulting culture of collaboration hold new leaders to the transformation journey. This is what Jim Collins called the "Flywheel Effect," the building of momentum through continuous effort over time (Collins 2001).

But perhaps the biggest barrier is the reluctance of both management and the union at the district level to really empower their school communities. We have helped districts put in place processes for schools to come forward and ask the district for more empowerment and to be released from administrative policies and provisions in the collective bargaining agreement. In Elgin, this is called the site exception process and is expressly for the purpose "to improve student learning and performance" (The Elgin Agreement 2019, 115). To get a site exception requires a super-majority of the teachers at the school and both the approval of the School Board and the Elgin Teachers Association. Our experience in many districts with these provisions is that too few schools ask for the exceptions and often the district and union are reluctant to grant them. Again, these systems are stuck.

The frustration of the outside world with this inability to transform districts and schools, especially for poor kids and kids of color, has led to the charter movement to create schools that are independent of the system including the union. David Osborne in his book *Reinventing America's Schools* argues for the power of charter schools to free parents and students from oppressive bureaucracies and unions. "Most charter school leaders believe that industrial unionism, with its labor vs. management paradigm, is a poor fit for education. They prefer to view teachers as professionals, giving many of them decision-making roles"(Osborne 2017, 13). This view is not that different from the vision of Comprehensive Teacher Unionism, except it does not see current teacher unions as capable of this kind of professional unionism.

Districts and unions have both seen charter schools as a threat, taking away students, money, and members. This has led to increasing political resistance to charter schools. Osborne himself in the light of this resistance has argued for a different approach, what he calls Innovation Zones. "In most (Innovation Zones), schools remain district schools with district employees" (Osborne 2021). Key to schools in the Innovation Zone is meaningful autonomy at the school level.

This is the challenge for aspiring Comprehensive Teacher Unions and their school district partners, finding a third way that is more robust than the current site exception process but not creating separate charter schools, something like the empowerment at the school level that happens in an Innovation Zone. This third way would give schools control over staff, budget and program including curriculum with accountability for results. This would provide schools the opportunity to create collective, empowered public spaces at the school, PLC, and student team levels that are necessary for teachers to become a profession and a professional union. It would be the role of the union and management at the district level to support capacity building and keep the playing field level to assure equity for all students and hold all schools accountable for results.

District and union partners would also have an additional role especially in high need, poverty-impacted communities and that is to organize with other community partners the external integrated support systems to provide the health and well-being for families and students that is foundational to learning. The Community Schools Strategy is a way to do this (Community Schools Playbook). For the Comprehensive Teacher Union, this is a strategy to implement Social Justice Unionism.

In this paper, I have tried to describe what it means to be a Comprehensive Teachers Union and provide some historical context for this kind of unionism as well as a case for its importance if our teachers and ultimately our students are to become all that they can be. This has been my life's work, my vocation as an organizer. It is a work in progress with a lot of other partners, and it is still aspirational and far from a reality. Indeed, it is not a certainty that we will succeed. But for me as well as others I think the vision is too compelling and important not to keep pursuing it.

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Abstract

This paper describes what it means to a be a Comprehensive Teachers Union, one that integrates industrial unionism, professional unionism, and social justice unionism, providing a historical context for this evolution. The author relates his own journey in becoming a union organizer and then in building public spaces for teachers to find their collective voice and power, first in more adversarial settings and then through labor-management collaboration in the professional setting of teaching and learning. He describes how the union becomes the vehicle for transforming teaching into a genuine profession and how this collective efficacy can be realized up against a deeply entrenched top down command and control system. The union cannot make this journey alone but has to do it in partnership with school management and school boards through labor-management collaboration and a systems transformation vision and strategy. Ultimately this is a strategy not only to democratize teaching but to democratize learning for students as well.

November 7, 2023

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Nancy Mullen – Presentation Notes

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Heather Peske – Presentation

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Evan Stone – Presentation

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Shannon McLoud – Testimony

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Providence Teacher Union – Testimony

Meeting Summary

This meeting was the second meeting in a series of three meetings that had expert presentations from nine individuals who have specific content knowledge in the education field. At this meeting we had four people present; Heather Peske, President, National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), Nancy Mullen, Retired Principal-Hope High School, Paul Reville, Harvard University, and Evan Stone, Co-Founder of Educators for Excellence. Nancy Mullen presents first and talks about her experience leading a Providence High School. Similarly, she talks about her experience in Massachusetts and the administrative structure at her school. She explains how Massachusetts systems are different from Rhode Island, and a lot of these practices would be beneficial in Providence. An open dialogue began with Aaron Easter-Gardner. Notable dialogue includes the following; the disadvantage of a longer school day, school-based flexibility, administrative freedom, and the 90-day rule.

Second, Evan Stone, Co-Founder of Educators for Excellence presented his data and research on perceptions of teacher across the country and how school-based contracts should change for positive outcomes. Mr. Stone references a variety of data points. Key points include; adversarial process, including bargaining, prevent affective collaboration, teachers want districts to be nimble in the face of hiring challenges, and teachers want increase teacher leadership opportunities and improved professional growth systems. He concludes by providing three potential solutions to combat these issues. First, focus on relationships and create mechanisms for trust-building; second, authentically gather teacher perspective to transform teaching into the profession they seek; third, build in more opportunity for flexibility to allow schools to keep pace with a changing world. An open dialogue began with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes the following; pilot schools, changing teacher tenure and seniority, and retaining and recruiting teachers of color. Third, Heather Peske, President, National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) presented on teacher approaches to insure effective teachers educate students. NCTQ collects data from districts and states to evaluate for best practices. In particular, NCTQ holds the teacher contract database which is a public resource. Mrs. Peske gives an example of Minneapolis Public Schools and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers collaboration. These collaborations include; relationships, trust, and communication, shared decision-making and voice, transparency and accountability, and evidence-based strategies. Minneapolis's main goal is maintaining a deep focus on students and students learning. Mrs. Peske believes this approach can be best practice to approach policies to attract, support, and retain most effectives for Providence's students. An open dialogue began with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes the following; compensation, evaluation systems, and budget transparency (unions). Lastly, Paul Reville from Harvard University, Director of the Education Redesign Lab presented his viewpoint on state takeovers and the effect it has on education. He expresses in order to address our current crisis we need to act collaboratively. In particular, the chronic absenteeism in Providence is an issue that says a lot more than what it shows on the surface. Dramatic changes are needed in order to save the state of public education nationwide. Similarly, language in leadership is key in order to make change in our schools and prioritizing the needs of students in most important. Mr. Reville discusses the history of receivership, and believes Lawrence, Massachusetts has only been the effective receivership to date. Receivership has proven to benefit financial continuity but not in academic effectiveness. He concludes by stating that what we are seeing requires immediate action from union leaders, policy makers, and district administration. An open dialogue begins with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes the following; Massachusetts leading education framework, standard based school reform outcomes, expanded instructional time, considering student learning time in key areas, and teacher satisfaction.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 7, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Heather Peske – President, National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)
III. Nancy Mullen – Retired Principal, Hope High School & Marshfield High School (Fall River, MA).
IV. Paul Reville – Harvard University, Founding Director: Education Redesign Lab
V. Evan Stone – Co-Founder of Educators for Excellence
VI. Adjournment

This meeting will not be open to the public.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

PROVIDENCE TEACHERS UNION AFT AFL • CIO

The Providence Teachers Union's Initial Recommendations and Commitments for Rebuilding Providence Public Schools

The Providence Teachers Union represents almost 2,000 teachers and substitutes in the Providence public schools. We have been fighting for the conditions we need to teach and students need to learn for decades.

After so many changes of administration, crumbling school buildings, and lack of resources to support the instructional climate and well-being of our students and staff, we are heartened by the state's commitment to the students who attend Providence public schools and their families and to partnering with the PTU in finding solutions to the serious concerns we all share.

For far too long, we have been told by management that the PTU "does not represent students." We have regularly brought innovative and creative ideas regarding professional development, curriculum needs, hiring practices and teacher leadership pathways to the negotiation table only to be told: "You negotiate benefits, salary and working conditions; stay in your lane. *And while we may disagree with some aspects of what has transpired in the last two months, let's be crystal clear: The PTU—after extensive review of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy's report on the Providence Public School District, and after participating in all the listening sessions held by Rhode Island Department of Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green—is committed to partnering with the state to improve Providence Public Schools for all children.*

The PTU is committed to partnering with the state to improve Providence Public Schools for all children.

Moving our schools forward: Guiding principles for the state plan

Our union was built on the principle that *all* children deserve a high-quality education in a safe, healthy and welcoming environment. *All* children deserve schools that teach and nurture them so they have the opportunity to live fulfilling lives. *All* families and communities deserve public schools that reflect their voice, their input and their dreams for their children.

That is what public education is at its best—a ladder of opportunity, a path out of poverty, and a place where we both embrace diversity and promote common goals for the public good. *This is the vision that inspires teachers to become teachers, and it's the vision our union was born from.*

But the conditions and challenges that have existed for decades in Providence public schools fall far short of that vision. *No one knows that more than teachers do.* In 1993, when the "Providence Blueprint for Education" study first raised the alarm about the quality and crumbling infrastructure of our city's schools, the Providence Teachers Union was already calling for action on and investment in our schools.

Like Commissioner Infante-Green, we educators have been saddened and outraged by the inaction and lack of resources of the past decades. We teach and work in these conditions every day, and we see the cost to our students.

We are heartened that the state of Rhode Island is stepping up. We believe that the momentum finally exists for real change and real progress. Our union at every level (local, state and national) is fully committed to partnering with our state, our district and our community in this effort. We are "all in." That said, teachers across the country have too often seen state and district "reform" plans promise much, then founder. We don't want that to happen in Providence. We want to build on this momentum, not sit and wait for others, and in that spirit, we outline several steps we believe can help strengthen our public schools in Providence, as early as this September, as schools reopen. We believe any plan must first incorporate a few overarching principles:

1) *The spirit and the structure of any state plan must recognize that teachers and school staff are part of the solution, not a problem to be overcome.* Teachers' teaching conditions and students' learning conditions are one and the same. Teachers want what our students need. If the wholehearted goodwill, dedication and commitment of teachers is honored as a "given" in the state plan, that will go far toward making it a success. Unfortunately, we have already seen some wonderful teachers quit this summer, wondering whether they have a place in the Providence schools.

2) *Changes and improvement should be done with teachers, not to teachers.* To put it bluntly, we want to be at the table and not on the menu when decisions are made and ideas are brainstormed. We have so much to offer, from firsthand experience in our classrooms and schools, to a wealth of professional development offerings and resources our state and national unions can provide, to a strong track record in developing and implementing the proven community schools approach. We are asking the state and district to trust teachers and ask us what we need to do our

Changes and improvement should be done *with* teachers, not *to* teachers. To put it bluntly, we want to be at the table and not on the menu when decisions are made and ideas are brainstormed.

jobs. We are asking you to empower real teacher voice and agency and the freedom to teach.

3) *Likewise, change should happen with a broad range of partners, first and foremost families and our community. Every stakeholder has a valuable role to play.* Moving our schools forward will mean welcoming and heeding the involvement and input of all stakeholders: students, families, community groups, social justice advocates, teachers and school staff, district and state leaders, and a range of experts in education and student well-being. As we know only too well from disastrous top-down reform regimes in other cities, the path to success depends on this kind of inclusiveness. The PTU, the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, and the American Federation of Teachers want to work with every possible partner to help create the schools that Providence students need and deserve. We want the students and families of Providence to feel that their schools belong to them, not to the district, the state or a faceless reform effort.

4) *While teachers and our union have much to contribute and a great eagerness to contribute it, the state of Rhode Island has the ultimate responsibility for the success of this plan.* Our union at every level wants to offer the expertise and resources that are in our "wheelhouse." For example, the national AFT could assist in the implementation of a community schools approach by lending our staff and partner experts to this effort and through our AFT Innovation Fund. We can assist and participate in countless other ways. But the state must commit for the long term. What does this mean? It means the state must be willing to convene and lead a broad partnership. It means the state must be committed to approaches and strategies that are thoughtful and proven—not rehashes of reform fixes that have failed elsewhere. It means that the state must be willing to truly invest the resources it will take to fix our crumbling school buildings. It means that the state must be willing to invest in the staff and resources we know can work, from hiring more guidance counselors to funding urgently needed wraparound services.

Teachers are relieved and excited to see that the change and progress we have so long called for is finally beginning to happen. The PTU is not only committed but "chomping at the bit" to work with all stakeholders to address the many issues facing our school system. What we want for Providence is what our union has always been all about: We want to ensure that all our children receive the high-quality education they deserve in our public schools, and that our teachers have the freedom, support and resources to teach at their best. That work must begin today.

Teachers are relieved and excited to see that the change and progress we have so long called for is finally beginning to happen. The PTU is not only committed but "chomping at the bit" to work with all stakeholders to address the many issues facing our school system.

Specific recommendations:

Taking to heart the state's invitation to serve as a partner in addressing the issues identified in the Johns Hopkins report, the PTU has identified a set of priorities, desired outcomes and action steps to incorporate into the district-state intervention plan. We understand that the work to be done requires true partnership, with all voices, ideas and opinions valued and considered. To that end, the following is a list of some of the steps the PTU believes can bring about the changes in behaviors, ideas and relationships necessary to ensure the high-quality school system that the students, educators, families and all members of the Providence Public Schools community want and deserve.

While this is not an exhaustive list of the necessary steps to take and investments to make in our schools, the list below reflects the areas in which the PTU can offer effective and extensive help, and can and should play a lead role:

1. Developing behavioral norms for our schools

In collaboration with the state, the district, administrators, teachers, parents and students, we should develop a set of behavioral norms for all who enter our school buildings, and we should identify appropriate responses to behaviors not within those agreed-upon norms. Hospitals, places of worship, workplaces and stadiums all have behavioral norms and expectations. Developing such norms for our schools would bring them in line with these other venues and would create a safe learning and working environment. The PTU proposes convening the above-mentioned partners prior to the opening of the 2019-20 school year to begin this work.

2. Offering a union-sponsored professional development series

Recognizing the need for increased professional development related to working with students and families in a diverse, urban environment, the PTU, in partnership with the Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, will offer workshops for teachers and administrators on topics such as Trauma 101, Historical Trauma, De-escalation in the Classroom, Self-Care for Teachers/Administrators, Grief and Separation, and Mindfulness with Dr. Richard Booth. While these will provide value on a stand-alone basis, they will be considered as part of an overall PD plan in collaboration with the state and the district.

The PTU will also partner with the AFT and the RIFTHP to offer additional, ongoing professional development in these and other critical areas, such as support for English language learners, and content-related instructional strategies to increase academic rigor at all levels. The PTU will look to the many successful examples of union-management collaboration on systemic improvements to PD within Rhode Island and across the country in proposing a comprehensive professional learning system for Providence.

We should develop a set of behavioral norms for all who enter our school buildings, and identify appropriate responses to behaviors not within those agreed-upon norms.

The PTU recognizes the need for increased professional development related to working with students and families in a diverse, urban environment.

3. Increasing communication with community partners, families and students

PTU leaders and members are committed to engaging with the community, families and students on a regular basis. The PTU will meet with stakeholders at least on a monthly basis to answer questions, have discussions or address concerns. We are committed to building new relationships as well as strengthening existing ones.

4. Addressing cultural competency, bias and racism

The PTU acknowledges that systemic and institutional racism exists and wants to be part of the process in addressing ways to have difficult, yet necessary, conversations that lead to meaningful change. We want to be part of the conversation that helps to choose culturally accurate, relevant and meaningful curriculum.

We want to bring our community partners into our schools as leaders, teachers and resources—not, for example, as an add-on to Black History month, or a guest lecturer, or a helper after crisis and bloodshed, but as part of the fabric that is our school community. The PTU proposes to convene a work group, facilitated by experts in the field, to begin this conversation as soon as possible.

5. Addressing chronic absenteeism

A qualified teacher in every classroom is vital for successful learning. The PTU understands the importance of having a certified teacher in the classroom every day. But we hope the state's plan will also recognize the impact of continuing acute stress on teacher health and chronic disease, as borne out by research. Nearly half of teachers nationwide report experiencing high stress daily, and we believe the numbers are higher for teachers in Providence, given the current conditions under which teachers teach and students learn. So on one hand, we know that the conditions in schools have had a terrible effect on students as well as staff. But at the same time, we understand that teacher absences have been a problem. If a teacher has established patterns of absences (for example, Monday-Friday, or days before or after vacations) not attributable to mental/physical health conditions, this must be addressed. In these cases, in accordance with the language of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement, the district, through the Human Resources office, can and should follow appropriate statutory personnel procedures. The PTU is committed to working with the district to enforce this provision of the CBA.

6. Expanding partnerships for diversity

The RIFTHP, the PTU and the district are committed to growing partnerships with colleges and universities, to expanding on established relationships, and to designing and developing systems and programs to assist Providence in recruiting and retaining educators

The PTU acknowledges that systemic and institutional racism exists and wants to be part of the process in addressing ways to have difficult, yet necessary conversations that lead to meaningful change.

of color. The PTU calls for continuing involvement in the current RIFTHP-led statewide development of a RI Pathway to Teaching based on the Educators Rising curriculum, incorporating that program in the current Mount Pleasant High School Teacher Academy and piloting it in other Providence high schools.

In addition, we call for:

Adopting K-12 social justice standards
The PTU calls for the adoption of social justice standards from Teaching Tolerance (tolerance.org) and providing the professional development necessary to incorporate them into current practice and civics education curriculums in all high schools.

Increasing counselors and improving K-12 social-emotional support systems
Our children need social and emotional support at a level and to an extent never seen before. We need to make a concerted, collective effort to support our students in our schools with regard to their social-emotional well-being. The PTU calls upon the district and the state to immediately increase the number of counselors at our elementary, middle and high schools.

Developing community schools
Research shows that full-service community schools meet a wide range of student needs, engage families and community partners, and lead to increases in attendance and achievement. The Providence Teachers Union strongly suggests piloting a community schools program similar to the program at Agnes Little Elementary School, a nationally recognized community school in Pawtucket, R.I. The national AFT could assist in the implementation of a community schools approach by lending staff and partner experts to this effort and through our AFT Innovation Fund. We have a model, we have the will, we have many options, and we believe we can and should make this happen.

Conclusion

Much additional work needs to be done. The city must make fixing the condition of our schools an immediate priority. We must work together to ensure that our evaluation system and Peer Assistance and Review system provide teachers with effective feedback on their practice, professional development and support, and that appropriate statutory personnel procedures are followed when necessary.

The PTU is committed to working with all stakeholders to address the many issues facing our school system to ensure that all our children receive the high-quality education they deserve in our Providence public schools. Again, that work must begin today.

The PTU is committed to working with all stakeholders to address the many issues facing our school system. That work must begin today.

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Introduction: The Schools Providence Children Deserve

Providence children deserve a high quality, well-rounded, well-resourced, equitable education. They deserve emotional and mental health supports. They deserve a safe school community and safe, healthy school buildings. They deserve culturally relevant curricula. Providence parents deserve a school system that partners with them, engages them, and provides space for them to voice concerns and share ideas. Providence educators deserve well-resourced schools and classrooms, safe and healthy workplaces, excellent professional learning opportunities, and respect for their professional expertise. Providence neighborhoods deserve schools that serve as central hubs of the community.

On average, Providence schools spend slightly more per pupil than other Rhode Island districts,[1] but Providence students also experience poverty at greater rates than the rest of the state.[2] Providence public schools serve a student body that faces many challenges. 17% of Providence students have IEPs. 28% are English language learners – half of all of Rhode Island's English language learners attend Providence Public Schools. 37% of children in Providence live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level. 56% live in families using food stamps or SNAP.[3] Providence Public Schools educators are working hard to meet the needs of their students, from actively seeking out professional development on trauma-informed practices and advocating for greater resources for social-emotional learning to pushing for improvements to school buildings in dire need of repair and continuing to engage students in the classroom despite many obstacles. Providence educators are ready for the schools Providence children deserve, but they need more support. Providence kids need and deserve the support of their communities and the state of Rhode Island behind them.

Rules about hiring, transfers, evaluation, and many other management-focused strategies have been thrust upon Providence schools. Despite all these management-based reforms, our schools still have not made much progress. It is time to stop thinking that we can "manage" our way to better schools. Instead, we must place our focus on teaching and learning at the classroom level. We must ensure students have the tools and supports they need to learn and that educators have the tools and supports they need to do their job. On February 29, 2020, members of the Providence community came together for a day-long event organized by the Providence Teachers Union to brainstorm ways to provide these tools and supports. This report reflects the problems and proposed solutions prioritized by Providence teachers and the Providence school's community.

Proactive Community Engagement

Students' needs are best met when parents and the community are deeply engaged with their local schools and the work educators are doing. Many parents in Providence schools are interested and eager to understand better what is happening with their child's education and learning community and to take greater part in supporting students, teachers, and staff. However, Providence parents face a lot of

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[1] RI Department of Education. FY2018 Per Pupil Expenditures – Sorted by Net PPE. 21 June 2019.
[2] National Center for Education Statistics. ACS 2013-2017 Profile. Table CDP03.4.
[3] NCES 2018 data. nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch.

obstacles to deeper engagement in their school communities, including poverty, language barriers, and lack of a clear avenue to voice their concerns. A robust approach to meeting the diverse needs of Providence students includes meeting the needs of their families, specifically by providing services that both address challenges families are facing and draw parents into the school community. This robust, proactive approach to community engagement includes developing the district's wrap-around services and school environments that can serve as community hubs, as well as supporting educators and parents in building improved communication and stronger partnerships.

Community Schools and Wrap-around Services

What We Know

Community schools are places where teachers, families, community members and service providers can come together in coordinated, purposeful and results-focused partnerships. These schools become the center of their communities by providing the services to students, families and neighbors that best serve their needs, while at the same time promoting stable, healthy neighborhoods.

Community schools provide more than one type of service to students and the community, including things such as tutoring, community-based learning and other enrichment activities, medical services like primary, vision, dental, mental health and nutritional services, adult education classes, early childhood education, career and technical education, and restorative practices. Effective community schools are governed at the local level. Decisions are made by consulting with all stakeholders, including teachers and other school personnel. These adults, who interact with the students every day, can let others know the barriers that students face and need support with, in terms of helping prepare them for classroom learning.

Community schools work with students but also engage families and communities. Not only are families and communities the recipients of programs and supports in these schools, but they should also be seen as assets and become a fundamental part of the decision-making process in this strategy. When families and community members are a part of the process of planning and implementing a community school, they begin to have a deeper investment and ownership in the success of their own children and the school community.

The community school strategy for education can have a positive impact on student attendance, grade progression and graduation rates, and relationships among students and between students and adults in the school community.[4]

What We See

Many Providence families are struggling with the challenges posed by poverty, food insecurity, the immigration process, learning English, accessing consistent medical, dental, and mental health care, and finding the time and resources to provide academic, athletic, and social enrichment activities for their children. Providence educators have identified a need for more social workers and school psychologists, more community-based programs for students coping with anxiety, family challenges, and economic

[4] RAND NYC Community Schools study. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3245.html.

issues, and a need for more constructive afterschool program options for students. Families need access to adult English as a second language programs in addition to assistance meeting basic needs.

Community stakeholders agree that schools that currently do have more robust wrap-around service offerings are making a big difference in Providence.[5] There are many needs in the Providence community and with the right infusion of resources, vision, and community partnerships, Providence public schools can provide for those needs, build stronger school-community ties, and provide a healthier, safer learning and living environment for its students.

What We Hope For

Providence children deserve schools that serve as hubs of their neighborhoods and communities and that serve not just their academic needs, but nurture their physical, mental, and emotional well-being so that they can succeed in the classroom, as well as thrive in everyday life.

Our Goals:

1. Partner with local organizations and businesses to increase field trip offerings, school clubs, afterschool programs, and other enrichment activities (during the school year, weekends, and summer.).

2. Work with the district and community organizations to reduce chronic absenteeism by ensuring that children can get to school safely and efficiently. This includes advocating for "walking pools," bus passes, and guaranteed access to transportation to and from school for all Providence children, including those experiencing homelessness or displacement.

3. Create programs that help parents and students learn together by partnering with volunteers and community groups to offer evening and weekend ESL classes to parents at Providence schools.

4. Advocate for a district-wide commitment to deep anti-bias work with educators, administrators, students, and the community.

Making Parents Partners

What We Know

Research has established that parent engagement is a core component to student success. When parents are involved, students are more likely to earn higher grades, graduate from high school and attend post-secondary education, develop self-confidence and motivation in the classroom, and have better social skills and classroom behavior.[6]

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[5] Johns Hopkins School of Education. "Providence Public School District: A Review", June 2019. https://edpolicy.education.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PPSD-REVISED-FINAL.pdf, 77.

[6] Henderson, A. T. & K. L. Mapp. (2002). *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Experts advise that communication between school and families should be initiated by teachers and staff, should be timely, and should be consistent, frequent, and free of jargon.[7]

What We See

Providence parents are concerned about the state of their kids' schools, expressing concerns about lack of academic rigor, low expectations, insufficient support services and negative school culture,[8] but many parents currently feel cut off from communication and engagement with their kids' schools, in addition to facing other challenges in the form of systemic discrimination, poverty, and language barriers.[9] When parents are marginalized or demoralized, it can be challenging for schools to keep them involved, particularly for families of English language learners. Schools are not equipped with sufficient bilingual supports to communicate with families who speak languages besides English.

Several barriers to parent engagement exist in Providence but they are not insurmountable. Addressing other issues in Providence schools, including class size, access to student services, and supports for ELLs and their families can have great effect on educators' capacity to involve parents, and parents' ability to stay engaged. Smaller class sizes that allow teachers more time to engage with individual families, more comprehensive wrap-around services for students and families, and sufficient bilingual staff to communicate with parents who speak another language all serve to facilitate better communication between schools and parents and keep parents engaged in their children's education.

What We Hope For

Our Goals:

1. Identify parent leaders and volunteers and work with parents and school communities to establish a PTA or PTO in every school and provide parents assistance accessing the background check process so that they can more easily volunteer in schools.

2. Ensure that language translation services are available to families for parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher organization meetings, and any other school-based meetings seeking to engage families.

(www.sedl.org/connections); Mapp, K (2004) *Supporting Student Achievement: Family and Community Connections with Schools.* Family, School and Community Connections symposium: New Directions for Research, Practice and Evaluation at http://sedl.org/symposium2004/resources.html.

[7] Jayanthi, M., Nelson, J. S., Sawyer, V., Bursuck, W., D., Epstein, M.I H. (1995). Homework-communication problems among parents, classroom teachers, and special education teachers: An exploratory study. Remedial and Special Education, (16) 2, 102-116. March.

[8] Johns Hopkins, 53.

[9] Johns Hopkins, 4.

3. Appoint a bilingual parent liaison at each school who can help coordinate efforts to send regular school communications to parents and keep families apprised of school events and opportunities to engage.

4. Build on work educators are already doing to keep parents informed about their children's progress via two-way communication platforms with interpretation abilities.

Purposeful Governance & Collaboration

Educators in the district are frustrated by constant principal turnover, repeated changes to curriculum and testing, lack of time to work together with colleagues, and significant lack of support for special education, ELL programs, and social emotional learning, all of which are critically important to many of the students Providence serves.[10]

School Climate

What We Know

A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society. School climate is informed by norms, values and expectations that support students and staff feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. Collaboration between educators and stakeholders around a shared school vision can serve to improve situations where school climate is challenging.

What We See

Bullying among students is an issue in many Providence schools. Students and staff have witnessed daily bullying during lunch periods, as well as fights between students.[11] Educators have expressed concerns for the safety of both students and staff in Providence schools. As noted already, and elsewhere in this report, educators feel challenged by the lack of sufficient mental health support staff in the district to help kids build coping mechanisms and de-escalate tense situations.

Teachers and staff also worry about their lack of access to trauma-informed professional development because they know that the difficult circumstances many students face in their personal lives inform their behavior at school. Providence educators are concerned that the district has not fully equipped them to help these students and to offer the supports that could vastly improve school climate.

Many Providence educators feel deeply demoralized by what they are experiencing, both in terms of students having difficulty behaviorally and academically and feeling powerless to help them, and by a

[10] Johns Hopkins, 44.
[11] Johns Hopkins, 46.

lack of collaboration, trust, and vision from school and district administrators. An environment in which educators do not feel respected as professionals and experts in their fields, and where resources are insufficient to meet students' needs is not one in which teachers, staff, parents, and students can build the close, trusted relationships needed for learning to really blossom.

What We Hope For

Providence students and educators deserve safe learning environments and workplaces. They deserve a feeling of belonging and ownership over learning and teaching. Students deserve educators who have received relevant training and are well-prepared to meet their needs and educators deserve ongoing professional learning that supports the work they are doing with all students, but particularly students facing personal and academic obstacles.

The Providence community deserves a school system that engages all stakeholders to develop sustainable school wide culture and climate plans and stable, devoted leadership with the vision and capacity to implement those plans.

Our Goals:

1. Provide training to school leadership, teachers, and staff on trauma-informed responses to student behavior.

2. Build trust and comradery among staff by carving out time for team-building activities and collaborative planning and goal setting and prioritize educator mental health and well-being by offering time and space for meditation and reflection during the school week.

3. Create collaborative working groups comprised of school leadership, teachers, counselors, psychologists, and support staff to look at implementing restorative justice practices across the district.

Staff Diversity, Recruitment & Retention & Teacher Leadership

What We Know

A high degree of labor-management collaboration, positive school climate, and educators who reflect student body racial demographics have a significant impact on reducing turnover and improving student academic outcomes. Providence is not the only district facing these issues. Recent work on the Bronx Plan model in New York City provides an example of the transformative potential of deep union-district collaboration. In New York, The United Federation of Teachers' (UFT) 2018 contract created a model known as the Bronx Plan for transforming school culture, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and recruiting and retaining teachers and staff at schools facing challenges such as high turnover, vacancies, and high-needs student populations.

The model centers on labor-management collaboration at both the school and central administration level. Union chapter leaders and principals at participating schools must both agree to participate for a school to be eligible, and the program is guided by a central committee of UFT and chancellor-appointed

representatives, as well as school-level committees at each participating school. The committees take part in joint professional development on collaboration, facilitation, and shared decision making, and work twice a month with a trained facilitator.

The Bronx Plan school committees review their individual school's needs, look at the data, engage parents and community, and choose relevant supports and strategies to move the school community forward with support from the central committee. Some of these strategies for turnover and retention include holding school hiring fairs, creating a teacher recruiter position, and providing salary differentials in hard-to-staff areas. School committee strategies include ensuring that committees are selected collaboratively, and that school administration and educators are represented equally, ensuring access to job-embedded support as committees work to implement their plans, and ensuring that committee members have the space and safety to practice a "speak up" culture. The Bronx Plan also includes priority considerations for centrally funded initiatives including facilities upgrades, professional development programs, and community engagement and empowerment.

Research shows that union-district collaboration that in turn increases school-level collaboration, have a positive effect on student outcomes.[12] The Bronx Plan uses this model of collaborative work to implement strategies that will reduce teacher vacancies and turnover, improve recruitment efforts, and help school communities develop individualized solutions to the challenges they face.

What We See

As noted elsewhere in this report, Providence schools are suffering from teacher shortages, bilingual and ELL-certified staff shortages, and significant vacancies of counselors, psychologists and nurses who help meet students' most critical needs. Some of the schools serving the highest-needs students are suffering most from insufficient staffing, lack of consistent leadership, and a general sense of demoralization as the result of the state and city's disinvestment in Providence schools. Providence educators and willing and ready to take part in shaping the district's path forward and building a school system that Providence children deserve, but the lines of communication and collaboration between the district, school administrators, and educators have been cut off. Difficult school climates, pervasive under-resourcing, and overall stress and demoralization have taken a toll on Providence schools.

Further, Providence schools lack a teaching force that is representative of the racial and ethnic backgrounds of most of its student body. 67 percent of Providence students are Hispanic, and 16 percent are black, while 76 percent of Providence educators are white.[13] Only 9 percent are Hispanic and only 7 percent are black.[14] Educators of color have a positive effect on students of color, providing academic, social and emotional benefits.[15] Recruitment and retention of a diverse teaching force needs to be a critical priority of the district and the state. Providence educators need to be included in plans to recruit new teachers and staff, reduce turnover, build leadership opportunities, and improve morale.

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[12] S. Rubinstein & J. McCarthy. (2017). "National Study on Union-Management Partnerships and Educator Collaboration in US Public Schools."
[13] Rhode Island Department of Education. 2018-19 District Report Card for Providence.
[14] Rhode Island Department of Education. 2018-19 District Report Card for Providence.
[15] Carver, Desiree (2017) Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color. Learning Policy Institute; Cherng, HYS (2016) The importance of minority teachers: Students perceptions of minority versus white teachers.

What We Hope For

A model of deep, intentional, collaborative decision-making, community engagement, and targeted prioritization of needs, similar to New York's Bronx Plan could serve the Providence schools community well in terms of recruiting and retaining bilingual, ELL, and arts, science, and specialized staff, improving trust between educators, administrators and the community, providing leadership and professional development opportunities for educators, improving school climate, and ultimately building a path to the schools Providence students deserve.

Our Goals:

1. Create a "Grow Your Own" style program such as the "RI Pathway to Teaching program" to help paraprofessionals earn teacher licensure and attract young people of color to professions in education and develop community-based partnerships with the school district and local colleges and universities.
2. Mentoring programs have a positive effect on recruitment and retention for educators of color.[16] Develop a mentorship program for new educators of color in Providence schools, to improve long-term retention of diverse faculty and staff.
3. Expand mentoring and induction programs and the current Peer Assistance and Review program to support all new teachers and leaders in Providence.

Parent and student representation in collective bargaining

What We Know

Engaging parents and students in their schools is a critical factor in student academic success, positive school climate, social and emotional growth, and more. An active, invested community is also critical to ensuring that the school district and the state are providing Providence educators with the tools and resources they need to facilitate the education Providence children deserve.

What We See

From St. Paul, MN, to Chicago and Los Angeles, we have seen a number of recent examples of parents and communities joining educators in their efforts to win fair contracts that include not just fair pay and living wages but demand equitable resources across their school districts. With the backing of parents and the community, these campaigns have ensured student access to support services, including extra counselors, restorative justice coordinators, and librarians in high needs schools, improved supports for ELL teachers, students, and their families, won funding to decrease class sizes and reduce the high workload of special education teachers and staff, and banned ICE from entering school buildings without a criminal warrant. Providence teachers gathered with parents and community members in February of this year to collaborate on a way forward in response to the state's takeover of the Providence school system. That meeting led to robust, productive conversations, and many of the concerns and proposals highlighted in this report.

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[16] Exploring New Pathways to Recruit and Retain, AACTE 2019.; Phillips Joplin, Orman& Evans, 2004.

Across the country, Teachers are including parents and community members in study groups and in bargaining. In St. Paul, MN for example, during the union's 2013 contract negotiations parents testified on class size and about how important Pre-K was for their children.[17] In St. Paul, where community has become deeply engaged and supportive of the collective bargaining process, educators have also developed contract language implementing a Parent-Teacher Home visit project which saw increases in achievement and attendance and decreases in suspensions.

What We Hope For

Educators often note that "teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions." Parents and educators share many of the same goals – for children to have safe, enriching learning environments with all the resources needed to support their growth and development.

Our Goals:

1. Include parents as partners in developing union goals for advocacy and bargaining and find ways the PTU can mutually support the work parents are doing to engage with the district.

2. Hold union-organized meetings and community events that welcome parents and families to share their concerns, collaborate on goals, and build social ties.

Robust Student Support Services: Educating the Whole Child

Children are best served by an education that allows them to bring their whole selves to school and that supports all aspects of their development – mental, physical, emotional, and academic. Students thrive on individualized academic attention, support for second language acquisition, space for creative expression through music and the arts, and a safe educational environment that addresses traumas they face outside of school and nurtures their mental and emotional health. Smaller classes, school communities infused with comprehensive curricula and social emotional learning programs, ample school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers in every school, and appropriate support for English language learners will provide an environment in which Providence schools can truly educate the whole child.

Providence Students Deserve Smaller Classes

What We Know

[17] https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/teacher-community-unionism-lesson-st-paul

Evidence demonstrates that reducing class sizes, particularly in the early grades and for disadvantaged students, has a positive effect on student achievement. The Tennessee STAR study shows student achievement of students in small classes exceeding that of their peers across grade and subject level.[18]

There are also long-term effects to small classes in early years. The Tennessee study also indicated that for students in grades K-3, smaller class sizes had positive effects even when students returned to regular sized classes after third grade. Additionally, students who were assigned to smaller classes in early grades graduated on schedule at a higher rate than students from regular size classes (76% compared to 64%), dropped out less often (24% compared to 25%), and had a higher rate of graduating with honors (45% compared to 29%).

Smaller class sizes allow teachers to have more interaction with each student and recognize individual student needs. Problems and special needs can be recognized earlier with this closer interaction. Students tend to be on task more often and create fewer discipline problems, allowing teachers to spend more time on instruction.

One study suggests that smaller class sizes can lead to improved teacher recruitment and retention, because teachers perceive small class size as a positive working condition.[19] Another study of new teachers in New York City found that class size was a top three working condition that would impact a teacher's decision to stay in their school.[20] Teacher retention benefits overall school success as well as the financial impact of having to hire and retrain new teachers.

Class size is particularly beneficial to disadvantaged students from high-poverty and at-risk schools. One study showed lower than expected achievement gaps for grades 4 and 8 in states with lower student/teacher ratios.[21] In France reducing class size in high-poverty schools led to an achievement gap reduction.

What We See

Along with the evidence showing how students benefit from smaller classes, robust, fully staffed ELL programs, support for their social and emotional development, access to tutoring, and access to mental and physical health resources, Providence schools have a long way to go in terms of ensuring resources are in place to educate the whole child.

The benefits of small class sizes are clear, particularly for students experiencing poverty and other challenges faced by many Providence children. Despite this, Providence schools are inconsistent in enforcing appropriate class sizes. While the average elementary class size statewide is 20 students,[22]

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[18] Word, E., Johnston, J., Bain, H., Fulton, D. B., Boyd-Zaharias, J., Lintz, M. N., Achilles, C. M., Folger, J., & Breda, C. (1990). Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR): Tennessee's K–3 class size study. Nashville: Tennessee State Department of Education.

[19] Baker, B. D., Farrie, D. and Sciarra, D. G. (2016), Mind the Gap: 20 Years of Progress and Retrenchment in School Funding and Achievement Gaps. ETS Research Report Series, 2016: 1–37

[20] New York City Council Investigation Division. (2004). Report on Teacher Attrition and Retention.

[21] Baker, B. D., Farrie, D. and Sciarra, D. G. (2016), Mind the Gap: 20 Years of Progress and Retrenchment in School Funding and Achievement Gaps. ETS Research Report Series, 2016: 1–37

[22] EdCounts. Education Week Research Center. https://www.edweek.org/info/about/education-counts.html.

Providence – which educates a high-needs student body, including over half of Rhode Island's English language learners – has a maximum class size of 26 students. In some cases, up to 29 students may be in a class on a given day, and class sizes within subjects, buildings, and the district overall are not consistent. Overcrowding in Providence's ELL classes is also an issue of considerable concern given the needs of students learning English and adapting to a new culture and community. Teacher shortages as well as substitute shortages are an issue across the district.[23]

In the district's early childhood program, some pre-K teachers have expressed concern that frequently a single adult is alone in a full classroom,[24] potentially violating Rhode Island state regulations for pre-K classes, which require an adult to child ratio of 1:10 for four- and five-year-olds and 1:9 for three year olds and mixed three and four year old classes.[25]

What We Hope For

Providence children deserve class sizes that ensure they receive one-on-one attention, maximize their academic, social, and emotional development, and promote teacher retention and school staff stability.

Our Goals:

1. Aim for each class to have no more than 20 students rather than aiming for a school or district-wide average to ensure that each child is in an optimally sized class.[26] Consider incentive programs to recruit and retain teachers and staff in hard-to-staff schools or schools with significant vacancies.

2. Prioritize reducing class sizes in ELL classrooms, which are overcrowded and put ELL students at high risk for falling behind both in terms of language acquisition and academic growth.

ELL Assistance Programs

What We Know

New or emerging English speakers need teachers who are supported by ELL coordinators and staff. In addition to learning a new language, most ELLs also have to adjust to a new environment and culture, as well as learn new academic skills and content knowledge. Having access to bilingual teachers and staff as part of a bilingual program can be critical to quicker language acquisition. Research indicates that ELLs in high-quality bilingual programs develop academic proficiency as much as 3-6 years faster than students in English-based, non-bilingual programs.[27]

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[23] Johns Hopkins, 44.
[24] Johns Hopkins, 44
[25] https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Regulations/200ricr20106%20.pdf?ver=2019-07-24-162248-613.
[26] https://www.aft.org/position/class-size
[27] Collier, V.P. (1995) Acquiring a second language for school. Directions in Language & Education, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. 1(4).

The national research indicates that there must be a focus on literacy programs for ELLs. Key components of effective reading instruction for native English speakers identified by the National Reading Panel—phonemic awareness, phonics, oral language fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension and writing—also benefit ELLs, but with necessary adaptations such as extensive academic vocabulary instruction and oral English language development, cognate connections, and the explicit instruction of idioms and words with multiple meanings. A variety of interventions and instructional program models for ELLs are necessary.

Currently, schools around the country with effective instructional programs for ELLs implement various programs and strategies. Programs that are based on native language instruction are most referred to as "bilingual education" programs. These programs include dual immersion programs, two-way bilingual programs, transitional bilingual programs, developmental or maintenance bilingual programs and others. In such programs, ELLs are often exposed to content instruction in their native language for specified periods of time during the school day.

In programs such as English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), English Language Development (ELD) and sheltered instruction, native language instruction is often minimal, but they include structured research-based supports and methods.

Regardless of the type of second language acquisition program (dual immersion, ESL, ESOL, sheltered instruction, transitional bilingual, etc.) a school is implementing, the key to a program's effectiveness is that it be based on the research of language acquisition, that it include special instructional supports such as materials and resources designed for ELLs, and that it be staffed by educators who know how to work with this group of students and who receive ongoing professional development support. Colorín Colorado, the American Federation of Teachers' partnership project with PBS Station WETA, offers comprehensive guidance and multiple resources for ELLs, from Pre-K to 12th grade. It is the most widely accessed web resource on ELLs nationwide. The content has been developed by some of the most prominent researchers in the field and veteran practitioners in the instruction of ELLs.

What We See

28% of PPSD students are English language learners (ELLs), and Providence schools educate over half of all of the ELLs in the state of Rhode Island.[28] Fifty percent of Providence residents five years old and older speak a language other than English at home.[29] Despite this, the district lacks sufficient ELL coordinators to meet current student needs as well as sufficient bilingual staff to best support students and facilitate communication with their families.[30]

ELL students deserve teachers certified in the requisite areas who are well-prepared and knowledgeable about second language acquisition and strong support by school administrators who understand the challenges educators of ELLs face and what it takes to help their students succeed, as well as wraparound services to address their unique needs and keep their families connected to the school community.

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[28] NCES 2018 data. nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch.
[29] NCES 2018 data. nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch.
[30] Johns Hopkins, 44.

What We Hope For

The PTU's goal is to promote educational excellence and equity for ELLs and to help them become proficient in reading, writing, and communicating in the English language—to ensure they meet the same challenging standards required of all students.

Our Goals:

1. Make recruitment and retention of ELL certified teachers as well as bilingual teachers and staff a district priority and ensure regular, ongoing professional development for staff on best practices for ELL education. Resources should be made available for current Providence educators who do not already have ELL certification to get it.

2. Work with the district and community organizations to build wrap-around services geared towards the families of ELL students, including multilingual supports and parent councils to keep parents informed and engaged, as well as physical and mental health supports, food security assistance, social services and counseling, and extracurricular enrichment activities to meet the needs of students and families adjusting to a new environment and culture.

3. Maintain and expand the district's current transitional and developmental bilingual programs, as well as its existing dual language program.

School Support Services

What We Know

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) are essential to making sure students have the services they need to succeed academically and socially, inside and outside the classroom. They include professionals such as school counselors, psychologists, school social workers, occupational therapists, media specialists, speech-language pathologists and others. School counselors help all students in the areas of academic achievement, and social and career development.

While these jobs are essential to the academic and emotional success of students, Providence schools currently have a shortage of nurses, school psychologists, and counselors. Educators in Providence schools need resources and support professionals in place to work with students who have experienced trauma or family difficulty, who need extra learning supports, who are experiencing physical or mental health challenges, or who are at risk for engaging in behavior that is potentially harmful to themselves or others. Educators need support to help de-escalate tense situations, and help all students thrive academically, socially, and psychologically. Providence children deserve well-resourced schools with sufficient staffing to meet their complex needs.

What We See

17 percent of Providence students have IEPs.[31] Teachers in the district have expressed concerns that a high number of their students have experienced trauma. Some schools with high needs lack social workers, counselors and other specialized support staff.[32] Overall, despite the high needs of its student body, the district has one student support services staff member for every 83 students.

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommends that schools have at least one Registered Nurse for 125–775 students, depending on the student population's health issues. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that each school have a dedicated nurse.[33] Rhode Island's average student-to-nurse ratio of 632:1 is one of the lowest in the nation. However, it's not clear that the same can be said of Providence schools. Enrollment in PPS is currently close to 24,000 students across 43 schools but the district currently has 13 openings for school nurses in Providence.

Rhode Island has one school counselor ratio for every 392 students, the highest ratio in New England but better than the national average of 444.[34] The recommended student-to-counselor ratio is 250-to-1. With a student population of 24,000, Providence would ideally have at least 2 counselors per campus or a total of 96 counselors across the district. Currently, there are over two dozen openings for school counselor and psychologists' positions in the district.

There are currently seven full-time school psychologists' positions, and six part-time positions open in Providence School District. This deficit represents a severe backlog of requests to test and assist students who may have been referred for instructional supports, special education testing, mental health supports, and a variety of other critical academic and behavior supports that cannot be addressed due to personnel shortages.

These staffing shortages have significant consequences for students. According to RIDE, the PPS graduation, and drop-out rates for its students with IEPs did not meet the state targets for the 2015-16 school year (the most recent data available). In the five school years from 2011-12 to 2015-16, the district did not once meet state graduation targets for students with IEPs. The district met dropout rate targets for students with IEPs in only three of the five years. As of 2015-16, only 54% of students with IEPs graduated, and 23% dropped out.[35]

What We Hope For

Our Goals:

1. Take steps to address the school nurse shortage by working with local institutions of higher education to create pipeline opportunities for support personnel, high school students, family, or community members who have an interest and ability to enter the school nursing profession.

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[31] NCES data nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch.
[32] Johns Hopkins, 44.
[33] American Academy of Pediatrics. "Role of the School Nurse in Providing School Health Services." *Pediatrics.* 2016, 137 (6): e20160852.
[34] Find citation: according to a report by the American Civil Liberties Union
[35] RIDE DataCenter https://datacenter.ride.ri.gov/specialeducation.

2. Increase incentives for recruitment and retention of school psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses, including at the elementary school level, and including a push to employ a proportionate number of bilingual professionals to support the large proportion of ELLs enrolled in Providence schools.

Social Emotional Learning

What We Know

Advancements in the science of learning and development show that students do best when social, emotional and cognitive learning are connected. More than two decades of research from the Aspen Institute National Commission on Social Emotional and Academic Development demonstrates that learning is dependent on the relationship between educator and student.[36] Integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic learning leads to improved outcomes on a number of school success metrics including attendance, academic performance in terms of grades and test scores, graduation rates, college acceptance and attendance, career success, and more.[37]

Students do best academically in a school environment in which they feel safe enough to learn. A safe environment to learn is one where students' personal strengths are valued, and their identities and cultures are respected and one that emphasizes positive, equitable discipline practices over punitive, exclusionary discipline. Evidence suggests that the efforts to reduce punitive discipline and promote positive behavior supports has an especially great benefit for children historically marginalized by race and class.[38]

Small class sizes, a clear message of respect and affirmation of students' cultures and identities, and constructive discipline practices that provide encouragement and praise for positive behavior all foster strong relationships between students and educators and produce an environment where students feel safe enough to learn.

Relationships between educators and students are further enhanced when educators feel supported and valued. Supports for overall educator well-being and efforts by school districts and administration to reduce educator stress via fostering positive school climate, encouraging peer mentoring, and providing effective, relevant training, are all factors in the success of student social and emotional learning as well.[39] Ensuring that educators have needed supports and resources in place ensures that they can build deep relationships with students and families and best facilitate growth and discovery.

What We See

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[36] From A Nation At Risk To A Nation At Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (2018)
[37] From A Nation At Risk To A Nation At Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (2018), 18.
[38] From A Nation At Risk To A Nation At Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (2018), 38.
[39]Cook-Harvey, C. and Darling-Hammond, L. (2018) Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success, 45.

Providence educators have expressed strong interest and pride in the work they are already doing to promote social and emotional learning. However, teachers have felt cut off from access to professional development that would more deeply support SEL, and the district has not fostered collaboration between educators, staff, and administrators on ways to better develop approaches to SEL in Providence schools.[40] Further, despite teacher and staff concerns that a large number of students in Providence have experienced or are experiencing trauma, and some staff seeking out trauma-informed training on their own, Providence educators are not receiving sufficient trauma-informed SEL preparation across the district.[41]

What We Hope For

Our Goals:

1. Implement changes such as small classes and sufficient staffing of counselor, school psychologist and paraprofessional positions, that allow all educators the time and resources to nurture deep relationships with students and families, and ensure a culturally relevant, positive, and safe education environment for all students.

2. Identify opportunities for all Providence educators to attend SEL-relevant professional development, including trauma-informed training and work towards developing an educator-led ongoing SEL professional development program in Providence schools.

3. Prioritize positive behavior reinforcement over punitive, exclusionary discipline practices. For example, Providence could consider a program like what educators have recently negotiated elsewhere. In Boston, for instance, this looked like adding four district-wide restorative justice coach positions funded by the district.

Tutoring Programs

What We Know

Even with a well-rounded curriculum and excellent educators at the helm of classroom instruction, additional factors both in and outside of school can impede student progress. Academic tutoring programs provide supplemental academic support for students in school-based, home-based, or center-based settings. Schools can implement one-on-one or small group remedial programs for students and have a variety of provider options including university partnerships, teacher-led tutoring, or community organizations. Positive effects from tutoring rests on the individualization of instruction, in addition to the nurturing and attention provided by educators.

Reviews of research on academic tutoring programs pinpoint four key findings that support the positive impact of tutoring programs. Research indicates that tutoring by paraprofessionals (teacher assistants) and teachers is the most effective method – paraprofessionals and teachers have a greater positive effect on students than volunteer tutors.[42] Any in-person tutoring is more effective than online

[40] Johns Hopkins, 43.
[41] Johns Hopkins, 44.
[42] Amanda Inns et al. (2018); Ariana Baye et al. (2017); and Marta Pellegrini et al. (2018)

computer-based tutoring, which research indicates has little effect on student outcomes.[43] Research on tutoring programs at the high school level suggest academic tutoring may be an effective intervention to help students improve academic skills, stay in school, and graduate from high school.[44]

What We See

The need for additional tutoring supports in Providence schools is also clear. Over half of Providence students live in single-parent households. Nearly a third of parents of PPS students do not have a high school diploma. Many Providence parents speak a first language other than English, which may make it difficult for them to engage with school administrators and educators, most of whom are not bilingual, and may also make it difficult for them to help children with homework. In addition, for students experiencing trauma, disruptions at home, or other challenges, having access to one-on-one academic support as well as needed social, emotional, and health supports, is critical to ensure they do not fall behind. Expanded wrap-around services to students and their families should include a tutoring program geared towards kids who need additional academic help outside of school hours.

What We Hope For

Our Goals:

1. Secure state funding to offer academic support and enrichment after school and during the summer, especially to students needing extra support, such as students experiencing learning challenges, and provide sustained, guaranteed extra support to students who are socially, but not academically ready for promotion to the next grade level.

2. Partner with community organizations to identify volunteers willing to commit to tutoring Providence students and build an afterschool tutoring program accessible to PPS students and families.

3. Work with current community partners such as PASA, ARISE, Sweet Creations, PRYSM, STEAM Box, Providence Student Union, Young Voices, Beat the Streets and other thought partners to develop systems and support both within and outside of the school day for all of our youth. High Quality Professional Development led by certified educators, that is a cycle of professional development that include learning, reflection, and revision. as opposed to high paid consultants.

Clinically Focused Professional Learning

What We Know

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[43] Amanda Inns et al. (2018); Ariana Baye et al. (2017); and Marta Pellegrini et al. (2018)
[44] https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/10/19/tutoring-kids-chicago-study-215729 and https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/high-school/academic-tutoring.pdf.

Educators must continue to grow knowledge and skills throughout their careers. Critical to this growth of knowledge is access to high quality professional learning that is job-embedded and peer-led. Professional development is a continuous process of individual and collective examination and improvement of practice.

High quality professional development should provide knowledge about the teaching and learning process, align with standards and curriculum teachers currently use, and allow sufficient time, support, and resources to enable teachers to master new content and pedagogy and to integrate these into their practice. Educators and administrators must establish and communicate a clear vision, setting goals and objectives that align with the needs of the students, staff, and community.

There is a growing recognition that labor-management collaboration is an essential condition for improving student achievement.[45] Partnerships and shared decision-making hold more promise for meaningful reform than top-down policies made without teacher input. Collaborative practices around professional development in high-performing schools include a high degree of engagement between administrators and teachers in developing and selecting instructional materials, assessments and pedagogical approaches, embedded time in the workweek for teacher collaboration to improve instruction, and an openness among teachers to share best practices by visiting one another's classrooms.[46]

What We See

The district does not devote sufficient resources and funding to professional development. Teachers and administrators across the district lament the lack of meaningful professional development time.[47] Educators are not provided with opportunities to learn how to implement frequently changing curricula or develop new skills.

Of great concern, Providence educators do not have consistent access to professional development related to special student populations in the district. Special education teachers, have concerns that the district's lack of training prevents them from meeting Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requirements for their students.[48] Some teachers in the district have sought trauma-informed PD on their own via AFT. Teachers have lamented the lack of professional development supports regarding SEL and childhood trauma.

What We Hope For

Providence students and educators would be well-served by the creation of a labor-management professional learning committee that could provide space for both educators and administrators to work together to develop much-needed professional learning opportunities for Providence teachers and school staff.

Our Goals:

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[45] American Educator. Winter 2019-20.
[46] American Educator. Winter 2019-20.
[47] Johns Hopkins, 3.
[48] Johns Hopkins, 43.

1. Develop a labor-management professional learning committee to ensure that educators have input in professional development decisions and to build trust and common vision between the PTU and the district.

2. Ensure that professional development is job-embedded, provided in a variety of formats, and specific to the needs of educators in the Providence community.

3. Encourage educator-led programs of professional learning that provide meaningful opportunities for teachers and staff to take on leadership and mentorship roles within their school and district communities and ensure that professional development opportunities are reflective of Providence educator and student needs.

Educator-Led Common Planning Time

What We Know

Cooperation is a key element of professional development and necessary to ensure a high-quality teaching force. When educators collaborate to share knowledge and to develop their skills and improvement strategies, students are likely to perform better.[49] Necessary to this collaboration is common planning time, where teachers are assigned to the same planning time during the school day with other educators in the same grade level or subject area. Educators need to be engaged with ideas and colleagues as part of the normal workday.

International research indicates that collaborative practices among teachers "lead to innovations in teaching and learning" and are a critical driver of school improvement.[50] In Singapore, for example, schools focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to allow teachers to work as professionals and share their expertise with each other. Peer collaboration also serves as a form of accountability. Teachers working together create a shared concept of good practice and are able to hold each other accountable to those practices. An international survey of teachers found that educators who were able to collaborate and exchange ideas with fellow teachers reported a more positive school environment and better student-teacher relationships.[51]

Making sufficient time for collaboration and cooperation can ultimately have a positive effect on student academic outcomes. A study of over 9,000 teachers in Florida public schools found that teachers and schools that engage in quality collaborative activities have better gains in math and reading.[52]

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[49] Schleicher, A. (March 9, 2013). Collaborative Culture is Key to Success. TES Connect. http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6323243

[50] McKinsey (2010). How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better, https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/industries/social%20sector/our%20insights/how%20the%20worlds%20most%20improved%20school%20systems%20keep%20getting%20better/how_the_worlds_most_improved_school_systems_keep_getting_better.ashx, pg. 44

[51] OECD (2012). TALIS, https://www.oecd.org/berlin/43541655.pdf, p. 122

[52] Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S. O., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J.A. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Education Research Journal, 52*(3), 475-514, http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.921.1537&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Research reviewing several other large-scale studies about teacher collaboration has found similar positive connections between collaboration and student achievement.[53]

What We See

Providence educators have noted that little time is set aside for planning and cooperation, and that it is difficult to have meaningful collaboration among staff in a school building without buy-in from administration.[54] Providence educators need time to plan, communicate, and collaborate around effective co-teaching and to make sure they are meeting students' needs, especially for ELL and special education students. Due to the complex needs of so many Providence students, ensuring that educators have time to work together and collaborate around school-wide approaches to academic programs and social and emotional learning is critical to Providence children's success.

What We Hope For

Our Goals

1. Ensure that principals and other school leaders at all grade levels, elementary through high school, prioritize collaborative planning in the daily school schedule, secure meeting space, and coordinate training for all educators, including teachers and support personnel.

2. Improve channels of communication among administrators and staff within schools to ensure that special education students and those with IEPs receive the supports they need quickly and consistently.

Team Teaching in High Needs Situations

What We Know

Team teaching requires co-planning, co-instruction, and co-assessing. The team-teaching model is typically used in inclusive settings with a content lead and a special education lead to better support individualized instruction for all students. However, team teaching can benefit all students in all types of classrooms. Benefits to students include deepening of analytical abilities, strengthening academic communities, improved teacher-student relationships, greater curricular coherence, and improved student learning outcomes, retention rates, and interpersonal skills.[55]

Teachers can also benefit through collaboration with and observation of their colleagues on a regular basis. General education teachers can learn strategies for supporting ELL and special education students, and ELL and special education teachers and staff can take advantage of the general curriculum and its

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[53] Ronfeldt, M. (2016). "Improving Teaching Through Collaboration," in *The Social Side of Education Reform*, ed. Esther Quintero (Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute), p. 7. http://www.distributedleadership.org/assets/asi-(2016).pdf

[54] Johns Hopkins, 43.

[55] https://ctl.byu.edu/tip/team-teaching-brief-summary

instruction. Other benefits include developing stronger collegial relationships, avoiding teacher silos, having more creative opportunities, and making connections across disciplines.

What We See

Students in high needs areas can certainly benefit from having two lead teachers in the classroom, a significant issue in Providence schools. For students with special needs, team teaching allows those students to be in the same classroom as their peers while providing all students with the same general curriculum. Teachers of English Language Learners also typically support this model because their students receive the general curriculum and also the additional language supports they need.
The shortage of teachers and staff in Providence schools, particularly in ELL classrooms, makes team-teaching a challenge currently, to the detriment of many PPS students who could benefit from this approach.

What We Hope For

Providence children deserve well-resourced classrooms, that in some cases, due to the district's high ELL population and significant number of students with special needs, means having more than one teacher in the room, representing needed specialties.

Our Goals:

1. Build intentional co-teaching teams and foster team-teaching environments for special education and ELL classrooms to allow students access to both specialized support and content, teachers, and staff from mainstream classrooms.

2. Ensure that planning time is built into the daily schedule for co-teachers to work together on classroom issues, lesson plans, and long-term goals.

High Quality Comprehensive Curriculum

Providence children deserve a high quality, comprehensive curriculum that honors their diverse cultures and experiences, fosters creativity and critical thinking, and sets high expectations for their academic achievement.

District-wide Curriculum Alignment & Fully Resourced Curriculum Implementation

What We Know

Students are best served by an evolving curriculum that matches their learning experiences in school to societal changes and lays the groundwork for their future success. Providence children deserve a robust, culturally responsive curriculum that integrates creativity and critical thinking into everyday lessons and prepares students for a successful future in a rapidly changing world. Curriculum should not be limited to math and reading instruction but must include opportunities for students to explore questions and express their creativity through science, social studies, physical education, art, and music.

Research shows that integrating the arts into curricula has many positive benefits for student achievement, behavior, children's self-confidence, and social skills, and overall engagement in learning.[56] These benefits may be amplified for economically disadvantaged or at-risk youth.[57] Further, many Providence educators envision a project-based, hands-on curriculum for their students, with real-world applications, that can help students think critically, connect with the learning material, and make sense of their own lives and communities.

What We See

School administrators, teachers, and students have concerns that district does not have a coherent, comprehensive curriculum plan in place, in addition to lack of professional development available to teachers and staff to implement such a curriculum.[58] Providence teachers have seen students struggle with curricula that are inconsistent within and across grades.[59] In addition to problems already noted in terms of lack of teacher training, planning and collaboration time, many teachers feel that frequent changes to curriculum and not having sufficient access to curriculum materials prior to the school year (or even within the first couple of months) have made it even more challenging to provide their students with a coherent experience.[60]

Parents and teachers have expressed concern that resources are distributed unevenly across the school district. Further, some Providence schools lack sufficient teachers to provide consistent arts, social studies, and science education, including at least one school that lacks a science teacher for an entire grade level, and another that lacks a social studies teacher.[61] In other schools, gym facilities are either in such bad repair that they are difficult for students to access, or physical education classes are limited to the very basics.[62] Children at some Providence schools have access to recess, as well as arts and music programs, but many others go without.[63] ELA and math curricula in the district are inconsistent, including within schools and classrooms in the same grade and same building, with some principals having purchased a dozen or more different curricula for use in their buildings, often without providing relevant professional development.[64] The lack of training on available curricula has led some teachers to rely on older curricula, limiting their access to and capacity to implement a culturally relevant curriculum with diverse representations that better reflect Providence's student body.

What We Hope For

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[56] Catterall, J.S. (2002). The arts and the transfer of learning. In Deasy, R.J (Ed.), Critical links: learning in the arts and student academic and social development. Washington, D.C.: Arts Education Partnership. Retrieved from: http://www.aeparts.org/files/publications/CriticalLinks.pdf; Iwai, K. (2003). The contribution of arts education to children's lives. Retrieved from http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/40522/12669211823contribution_AE.pdf/contribution%2BAE.pdf.
[57] U.S. Department Of Education, (2004, August 26). The Importance of Arts Education. Retrieved from: http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/updates/040826.html.
[58] Johns Hopkins, 39.
[59] Johns Hopkins, 46.
[60] Johns Hopkins, 44, 46.
[61] Johns Hopkins, 44, 46.
[62] Johns Hopkins, 41 and 55
[63] Johns Hopkins, 54.
[64] JH, 32-33.

Providence children deserve an equitable education and a culturally relevant curriculum. They deserve an investment in their future from the state of Rhode Island via a fully resourced, comprehensive, arts-integrated curriculum.

Our Goals:

1. Employ a district-wide comprehensive curriculum plan selected and developed in collaboration with school and district leadership, teachers, and staff that includes robust arts, science, social science, and physical education offerings, as well as ongoing job-embedded, educator-led professional development to support the curriculum.

2. Ensure that the district is properly staffed to offer a comprehensive curriculum to all students, including implementing practices that recruit and retain a diverse, well-rounded teaching force.

3. Provide educators access to learning materials that reflect the population of students in Providence schools, including diverse viewpoints and diverse visual representation in textbooks, media, and other classroom resources.

ARISE and Social Justice Infused into Daily Curriculum

What We Know

Like many U.S. cities, historical patterns of racial discrimination have left a legacy of neighborhood and school segregation. We know that school segregation leads to unequal distribution of resources and can concentrate poverty and marginalization in some buildings while hoarding opportunity in others.

Pressure on test results and student academic achievement without regard for the barriers to effective instruction facing children and their teachers, can lead to punitive discipline measures against both students and educators. Nationally, children of color are suspended from school at significantly higher rates than white students.[65] Equity in education means that students who have been historically marginalized and are facing the challenges of racism and poverty need the same access to a high quality education that many privileged children receive, but also need additional supports to foster growth and ensure their future success. Many of the supports noted in this report, while important for students of all backgrounds, are particularly critical for historically marginalized children and youth, and often have a more significant positive impact on the lives of those students than they do for students who already have access to wealth, resources, and racial privilege. Likewise, lack of teacher and staff diversity, high turnover, and punitive discipline practices have a greater negative impact on the students largely served by districts like Providence.

What We See

[65] U.S. Government Accountability Office. "K-12 Education: Discpline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities." GAO-18-258: Published Mar 22, 2018. Publicly Released: Apr 4, 2018. https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-258.

Roughly 65% of Providence students are of color. Providence schools serve a student body with a significant immigrant population, including many English language learners. Half of all the ELLs in the state of Rhode Island attend Providence public schools. The district also educates a significant number of students with IEPs.

Teachers and community members have pointed to organizations like ARISE, whose mission is to "prepare, promote, and empower Rhode Island's Southeast Asian students for educational and career success." In addition to running afterschool programs in PPS at Central High School and Classical High School, ARISE also organizes campaigns around issues relevant to the students it works with. ARISE provides a look at some of the ways that PPS can infuse social justice themes into a culturally responsive curriculum aimed at acknowledging and addressing the challenges of poverty and racial marginalization facing many of its students.

What We Hope For

Providence children deserve social justice. They deserve a curriculum informed by realities facing their communities including racial and economic marginalization as well as fair, responsive, restorative discipline practices. Due to the high concentration of needs in the district, for Providence children to get the education they deserve, the district and the state must make an intentional, sustained investment in Providence schools and promote teacher stability, mental and physical health of students, culturally responsive curriculum and school climate, and restorative justice.

Our Goals:

1. Build on the work of organizations like ARISE to empower marginalized youth and infuse social justice and equity into the daily life of students at school.

2. Push for a district-wide commitment to deep anti-bias work, including educators, staff, school and district administrators, as well as students and families.

Quality School Facilities

What We Know

Excellent teaching, and a comprehensive curriculum are insufficient if communities lack safe, clean, updated school facilities. Evidence shows that an unhealthy physical school environment has a negative impact on students' health, academic achievement, and daily attendance.[66] Leaks from rain or damaged plumbing, overcrowded classrooms, and broken classroom furniture can cause distraction and detract from learning. Mold and HVAC issues affect air quality and can aggravate asthma and other existing conditions. Poor lighting can make it difficult to read, write, or do other work. Asbestos and lead exposure are known serious health hazards. Asbestos can lead to lung damage and cancer. Though there is no "safe" level of lead exposure for anyone of any age, lead poisoning is a particularly serious concern

[66] U.S. Department of Education, *A Summary of Scientific Findings on Adverse Effects of Indoor Environments on Students' Health, Academic Performance, and Attendance*, Mark J. Mendell, and Garvin Heath (Washington, DC 2004).

for children aged six and under, due to the profound effect it can have on their physical and cognitive development.

Unhealthy and unsafe facilities also influence recruitment and retention of teachers and staff. A survey from 2004 showed that school building quality could predict whether teachers wanted to leave their positions, or even the profession entirely.[67] In the study, which looked at Washington, DC and Chicago, 40 percent of respondents who had suffered poor health outcomes related to school facility issues said they were considering leaving teaching.[68]

What We See

Many Providence school facilities are in poor physical condition. The Johns Hopkins report on Providence schools released in 2019 notes that in all but one of the elementary schools the research team visited, buildings were in a condition that "clearly disrupted learning and possibly students' health."[69] Children in some school buildings are exposed to lead via drinking water and peeling paint, and asbestos exposure was a concern at others.[70] Across the district, school buildings suffer from insufficient lighting, rodent problems, mold issues, HVAC issues, as well as water fountains, walls, and classroom furniture in need of repair. Requests for basic facility repairs such as broken windows meet with slow responses.[71]

What We Hope For

Providence students and educators deserve school buildings that foster, rather than hinder, learning and that communicate to children that their community and state values them and is invested in their well-being and success.

Our Goals:

1. Prioritize and develop a plan for renovation of buildings with unsafe or unhealthy conditions such as exposed asbestos, lead contamination, mold, crumbling walls, warped floors, and exposed plumbing and guarantee that all students and staff in every building have access to clean, safe drinking water.

2. Improve the maintenance request system so that teachers and staff can report needed repairs, receive clear confirmation of their complaint and a clear timeline for when the repair will be made.

3. Upgrade Providence school buildings with well-lit, flexible classroom layouts and furniture that can accommodate both individual and small group work, as well as modern technology,

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[67] Jack Buckley, Mark Schneider and Yi Shang, The Effects of School Facility Quality on Teacher Retention in Urban School Districts (Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, 2004).
[68] Mark Schneider, Public School Facilities and Teaching: Washington, D.C., and Chicago (2003), www.21csf.org/csfhome/Documents/Teacher_Survey/SCHOOL_FACS_AND_TEACHING.pdf.
[69] Johns Hopkins, 28.
[70] Johns Hopkins., 40-41.
[71] Johns Hopkins, 41.

including a smart board in every classroom, chrome book access for students, and access to updated computers and technology for educators.

4. Advocate for safe, healthy outdoor recreation and play spaces at every Providence school.

Morgan Dimaio

From: Shannon McLoud <shanmcloud@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 8:48 PM
To: Morgan Dimaio
Subject: PPSD Accountability

Dear Ms. DiMaio,

I am a nine year veteran of the Providence Public School District. In my career I have worked in both middle and high schools, for five different principals, four different Superintendents, and now a few years into the disastrous state takeover. I say disastrous as I have yet to see a policy enacted that had actual positive implications for my students.

To say Providence was broken pre - takeover would be an understatement. At this point we have all read the John Hopkins report. In fact my classroom, a senior AP Lit class, was visited for the last ten minutes of class on the seniors' last day of school. I knew then that the report was going to be used to harbor more control over the district, but I never imagined how difficult it would make teaching in Providence.

Let's first discuss communication and collaboration, because in my opinion, they go hand in hand. Prior to the takeover, as a Teacher Leader for my department, I was frequently asked to join learning walks with the district, I was approached by district admin to assist on district wide projects, and I was sent a weekly email from RPA that outlined any testing that would be coming up, pertinent data, and information about RTII. It felt like a partnership. Sadly, it no longer feels like that. The weekly communication stopped soon after the takeover. Now under the takeover, emails regarding a testing window and policies are sent out sometimes days before, when schools and teachers have already planned their next lessons out. To put out a blanket mandate that a standardized unit test that teachers have not made is egregious. To do so and demand teachers drop their lessons to get to it right away is a blatant slap in the face. Data is hidden from teachers until it has been manipulated by the district. (For example, before the STAR reading window was closed, someone at district admin moved the goalposts for proficient readers to below the RI state average. This will ensure that it will look as if the TAP goals are met, but in actuality they will not have been.) In addition, the mandated end of unit exams are to be given as if it is a state mandated test, yet we are given direction to put the grade in our gradebooks. This is blatantly against the law, as it will inevitably violate IEPs. For example, a student may have an IEP accommodation that multiple choice answers cannot go above four. This is something we can do for classwork, but are not given the agency to do so for the end of unit exams. And although it is true that those same students cannot have that accomodation on their SAT exam, the SAT exam is not a graded exam recorded in their gradebook. These end of unit tests are expected to be. During this takeover walk-throughs turned into a micromanaged mission where we were constantly told by district admin that our

observations as school leaders were incorrect, and were strongarmed into writing what the district admin wished us to. It must be noted that said district admin doesn't even work in the district any longer, and has moved to greener, and more lucrative, pastures. That is one of the only consistent things throughout the takeover-people have been moved up here to "fix" the system, they disregard any institutional knowledge, and then they move to a new district that will pay them more. These are all avoidable issues if we were treated as the partners we once were treated as.

District administration has been controlled by one person, a deputy Superintendent. Their "leadership" has made it clear that they do not know what goes on in a classroom, or how students learn. Why this person is running the district as if teachers are a separate entity is beyond me.

We need real oversight in Providence with this takeover. We need the roving door of district admin to collaborate with the one constant in Providence; the teachers.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

--
Shannon McLoud
401-206-6604

Chronically Underperforming

MCAS

Demographics

500 students
85% free lunch
1/3 SE
No ELL
45 teachers—37 first year

Administrative Structure—DESE, School Department

1 Principal
2 VP's
2 guidance
2 DH's
1 SAC
1 full time SRO
1 full time nurse
1 full time librarian
SIP Coordinator/ Redesign Coach
In the end Wellness coordinator

America's Choice curriculum--DESE
Scripted
Opening, work period, close
Liaison Sheryl Rabbitt

Liaison from DESE
Matt George

Regulation/Legislation

Power to hire/fire?
Hull for probationary teachers

90 day rule
Emergency certification—cert within 5 years MTEL

Contractual

Lesson plans
1 after school faculty meeting. per month
1 after school curriculum meeting per month
Teacher evaluations—10 informal observations 3 mini observations with written feedback—who does them

District PD days—some controlled by district some by school

Schedule—DESE, School Deprtment

8 period day

Students per week
10 ELA
10 Math
9 Science
5 Social Studies
6 unified Arts

Teachers per week
ELA, Math Science 3 classes/day 75 students total
30 teaching periods
2 common planning time
8 prep

Expanded Learning Time (ELT). $ 25% more pay--DESE

Added 1 ½ hours/ day 7:35-4:125
2nd year changed to 7:05-3:45

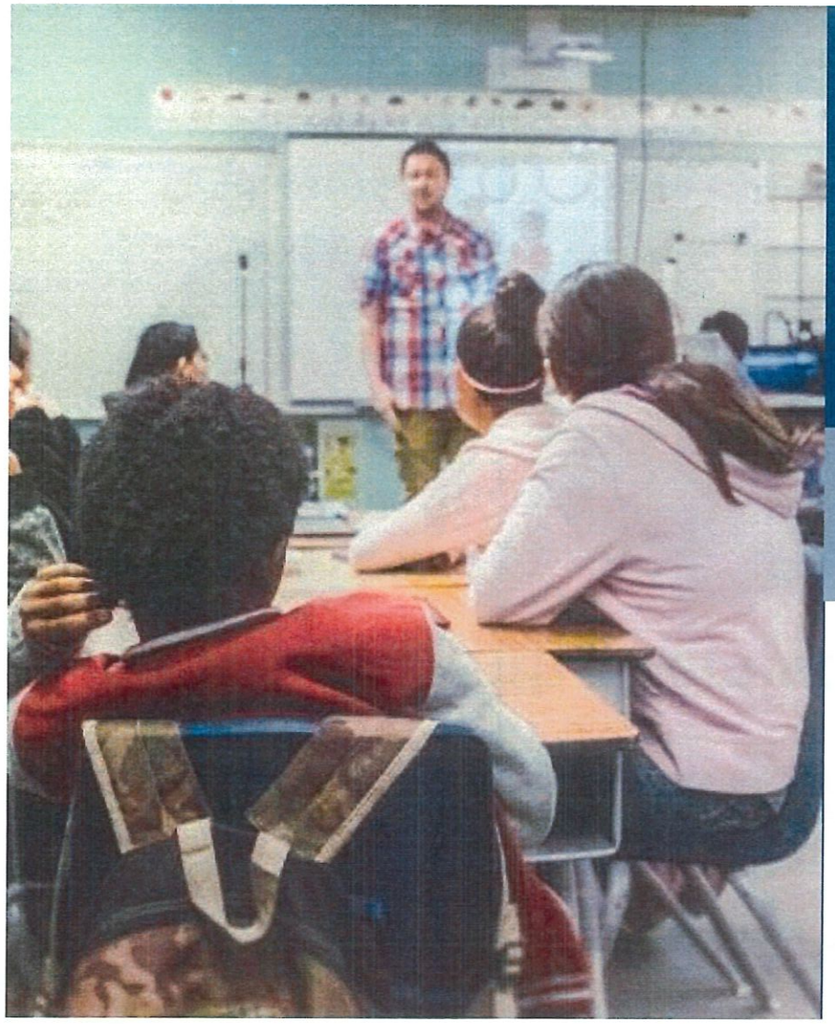
Added double block/day ELA, Math, Science, 2 other classes targeted intervention

Lesson plans for all—extra planning time

Mass 2020. Professional Development
Title 1 $ for PD
Century 21

Data Team—School Department

Role of Department Head



Rhode Island Special Senate Legislative Commission to Study Providence Public Schools

11/7/2023

Heather Peske, President
National Council on Teacher Quality

Teachers matter most to student success.

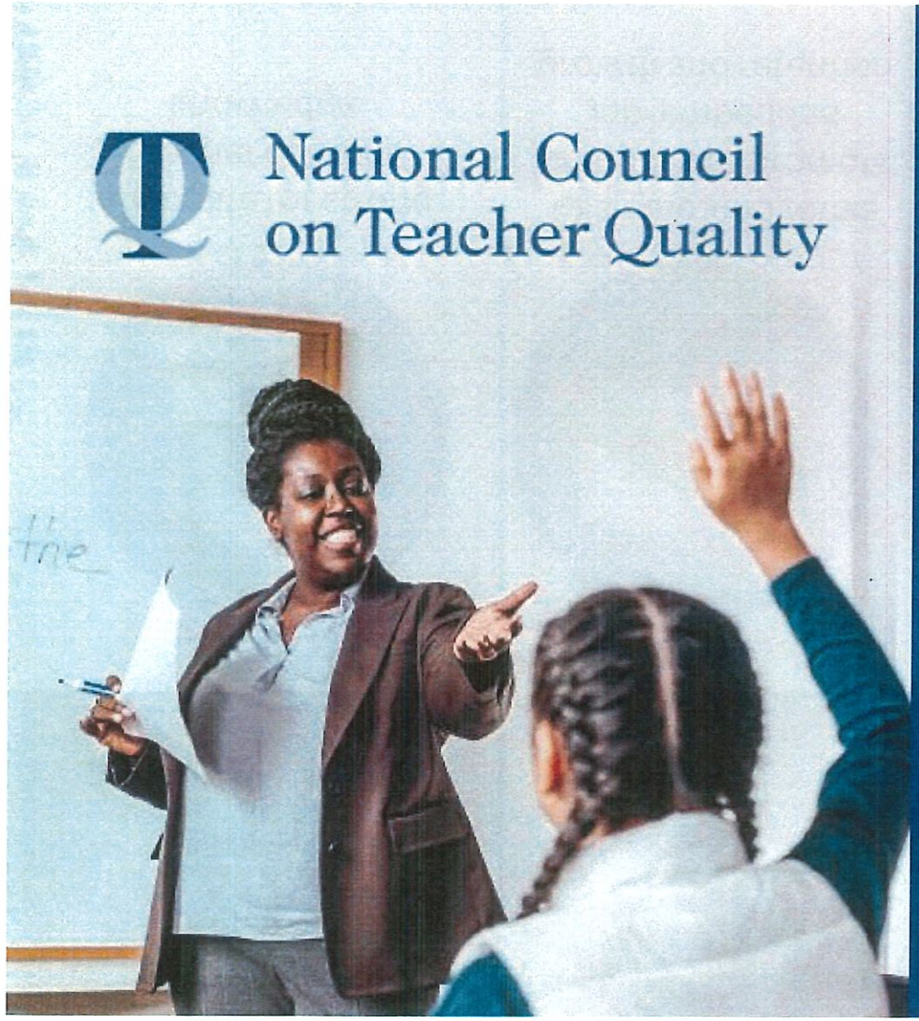
Students with effective teachers are more likely to...

Graduate high school

Go to college

Receive higher incomes

Experience greater well-being



Our Mission

Every child has an effective teacher and every teacher has the opportunity to become effective.

We focus on strategies that accelerate outcomes for students.

Advocate for strong teacher content knowledge

Examine innovative practices to promote job-embedded growth and retention

Promote transparency & accountability for states, districts, and teacher prep

Build a movement for policy and practice change

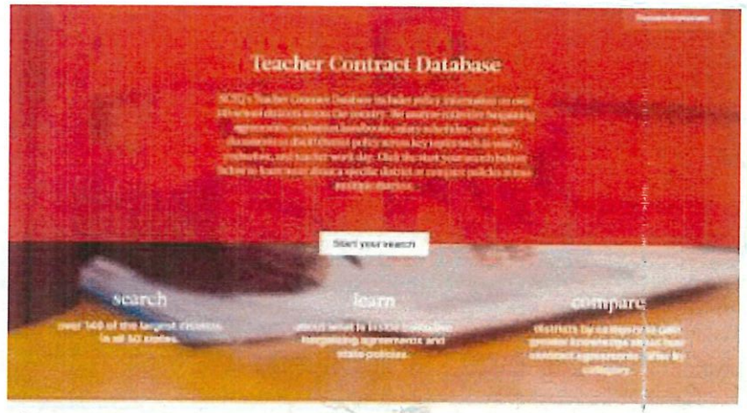
NCTQ's Teacher Contract Database

145

District contracts, evaluation handbooks, salary schedules, & other documents

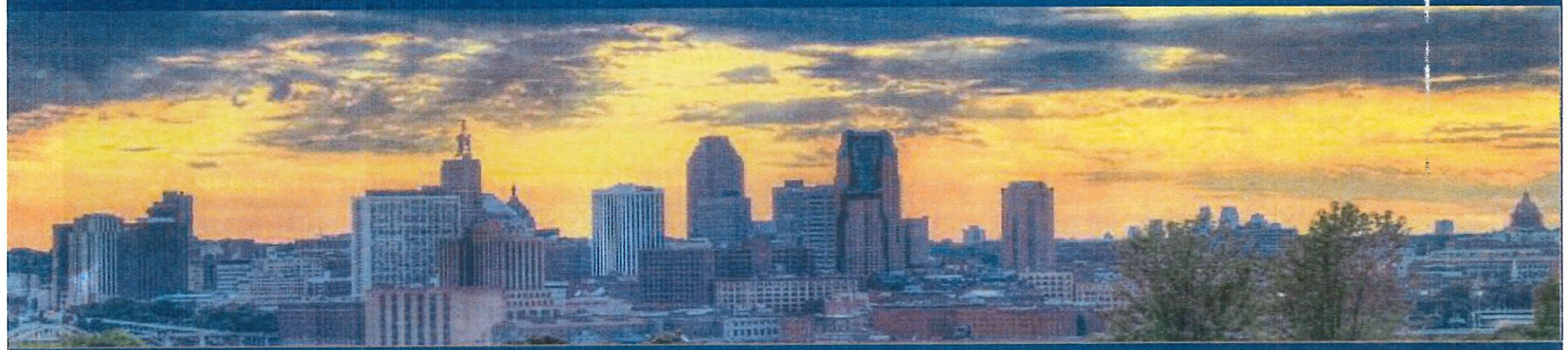
What we see:

Parameters about *what* topics and *when* to negotiate, but few examples of guidelines about *how* to negotiate or engage collaboratively.



Collaboration in Negotiation:

Minneapolis Public Schools & Minneapolis Federation of Teachers



- Relationships, Trust & Communication
- Shared Decision-Making and Voice
- Transparency & Accountability
- Evidence-Based Strategies

Collaboration in Negotiation:

Minneapolis Public Schools & Minneapolis Federation of Teachers

Approach:

- Maintaining a deep focus on **students** and **student learning**.
- Recognizing the needs of and work to elevate our **lowest-compensated employees**.
- Communicating accurate information openly and **transparently**.
- Learning union priorities and identifying areas of **common interest** and opportunities to build and sustain lasting **partnerships**.
- Establishing and maintaining financial expenditure parameters that support Minneapolis Public Schools' financial solvency and that align to the **strategic plan**.
- Preparing and planning for timely negotiations so that all employees are working under a **current** contract.

To support a culture of collaboration for strong student outcomes, **prioritize what is best for students.**

Ask:

What will be the best approach and policies to attract, support, and retain the **most effective teachers** for Providence's **students**?

Levers of collaboration for **strong student outcomes** between Unions & Management

- Instructional materials and professional development
- Increasing teacher diversity
- Common planning time
- Compensation
- Strategic Staffing
- Support staff

Every child *can* have effective, diverse educators – especially if the union and the district collaborate.

Extra Slides

NCTQ's Overarching Priorities

Encourage strong policies and practices that attract, prepare, develop, support, and ultimately retain a highly-skilled, diverse teacher workforce.

Increase teachers' capacity to improve elementary student reading and math outcomes.

Spur states to action in building robust, real-time teacher supply and demand datasets to inform strategic, evidence-driven policy.

NCTQ's Theory of Action

If NCTQ:

Collaborates with stakeholders
to identify needed teacher workforce policy and practice changes and align on clear standards for effective policy and practice

Leverages our unparalleled data sets
to analyze current performance, identify important trends, and provide data-driven recommendations

Shares promising practices
to help the entire field advance by learning from and, where possible, replicating the good work of others

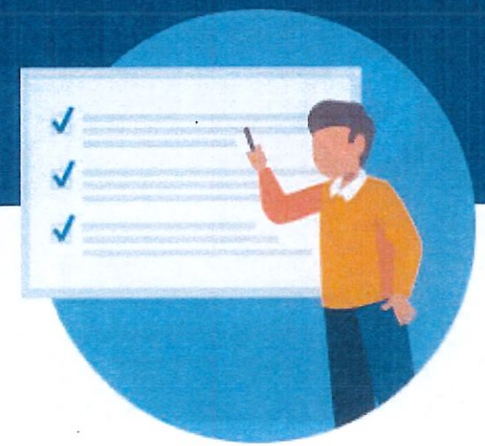
Engages partners
to build on-the-ground momentum and influence the actors with the most influence on teacher quality

THEN:

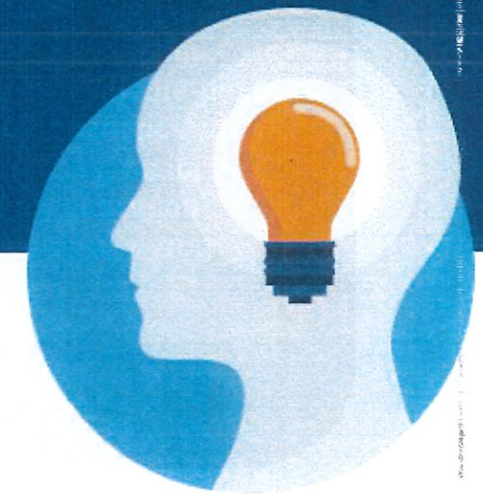
States, districts, and teacher preparation programs will enact policy and practice to ensure all students have an effective teacher - and all teachers have the opportunity to be effective.

We are making a positive impact.

In 2021-2022, NCTQ spurred 5 states to adopt stronger policies to support effective reading instruction.



We have called attention to weak teacher prep programs and seen states hold them more accountable.

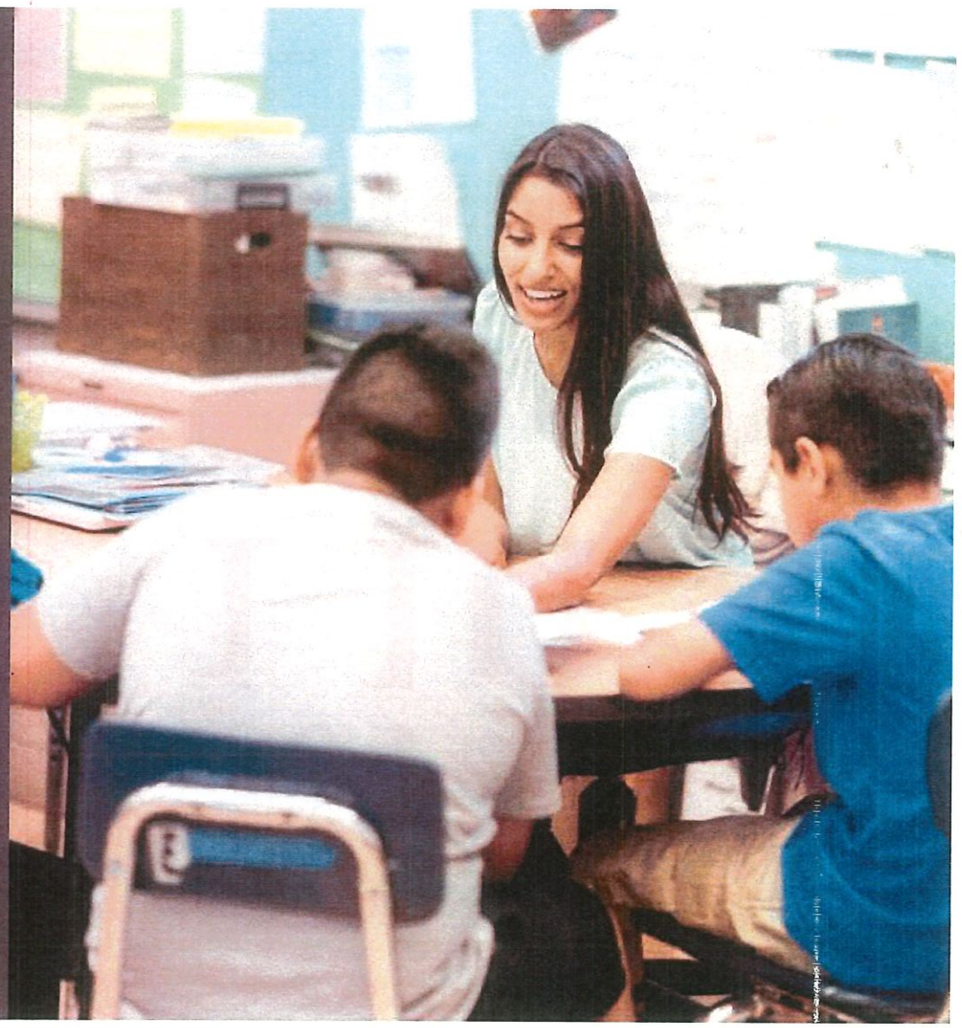


We worked with advocates on changing laws to improve reading instruction.

EDUCATORS FOR EXCELLENCE

Legislative Commission on Professional and Labor Management Standards in Providence Public Schools

Rhode Island Senate
November 7, 2023



Just

14%

of teachers would **recommend teaching** to a friend, family member, or acquaintance.

Only

1 in 3

teachers believe their school often **meets the needs** of their most vulnerable students.

E4E's "Voices from the Classroom 2023," nationally representative survey of 1,000 educators

How do contracts and the relationships among the people who bargain them contribute to these outcomes, and how can we fix it?

50+

interviews conducted

with school system leaders, union leaders, lawyers, community organizers, school transformation experts, PL providers, and policymakers

16

contracts reviewed

building upon a previous E4E-TNTP contract review of teacher contracts covering 50 LEAs

How do contracts and the relationships among the people who bargain them contribute to these outcomes?

1. Adversarial processes, including bargaining, prevent effective collaboration.

2. Teachers are seeking a different profession than their contract currently provides.

3. Rigid contract structures create barriers to innovation, such as team teaching models.

The latest fight over Providence schools

By **Dan McGowan** Globe Columnist, Updated December 12, 2022, 8:52 a.m.

Another year, another Christmas where the Providence Teachers Union and the city's school department aren't going to be exchanging gifts.

The dysfunctional relationship between the two groups was on full display once again this weekend when union leadership took to Twitter to announce that the district (and the Rhode Island Department of Education "have made a decision to close a number of Prov Schools."

"We don't have a culture where collaboration is acceptable in union relations. It gets you attacked. The default position is 'We're us, and they're them, and we have to fight for everything we get.'"

– Former union leader

"Let's play the game and wear each other down and get you to a point where you're so exhausted and over sitting with me, that you'll give me more. We'll say, fine, we don't need this, we're willing to give this up, we'll take it off the table."

– Former district leader

Solutions

And where we've seen them work

Build informal mechanisms for collaboration and information sharing outside of the bargaining process

"Places where we've seen the contract be leveraged successfully are places where they have governance structures where you're not just coming to the table for negotiations. You have a system where you're regularly meeting about the vision and goals for teaching and learning and how that relates to working conditions. Then, when it comes time for collective bargaining, those places in the contract, there can be movement." - Education consultant

Think broadly about who has relevant expertise, & bring them into the work

"When the community is a strong stakeholder, institutionalization [of processes, relationships] can happen in a productive way. The community expects & appreciates stability, they have an expectation of leadership to act in certain ways that's felt & understood." - National union leader

Leverage mediation mechanisms when consensus is not possible

Lawrence, MA: "The parties acknowledge that a Receiver has been appointed for the District, is vested with all the powers of the Superintendent and the School Committee ... and can exercise all powers granted to the School Committee, District, and/or Superintendent herein."

Teachers want differentiated compensation for teachers who:

WORK IN HARD TO STAFF SCHOOLS

Favored by 93% percent of teachers, including 96% of teachers of color

WORK IN HARD TO STAFF SUBJECTS

Favored by 87% of teachers, including 93% of teachers of color

RECEIVE MULTIPLE OUTSTANDING EVALUATIONS

Favored by 75% of teachers, including 84% of teachers of color

E4E's "Voices from the Classroom" nationally representative survey of 1,000 educators

Teachers want districts to be nimble in the face of hiring challenges.

Staffing Shortages	60% of teachers report that staffing shortages continue to be a very serious problem.
Apprenticeship Models	Teachers of color are twice as likely as white teachers to say that residency and apprenticeship models are likely to boost recruitment of a high-quality, diverse workforce.
Payment for Taking on Additional Work	The second most popular reason teachers choose for planning to leave the classroom is, "I take on too many additional responsibilities for which I am not compensated."

E4E's "Voices from the Classroom 2023," nationally representative survey of 1,000 educators

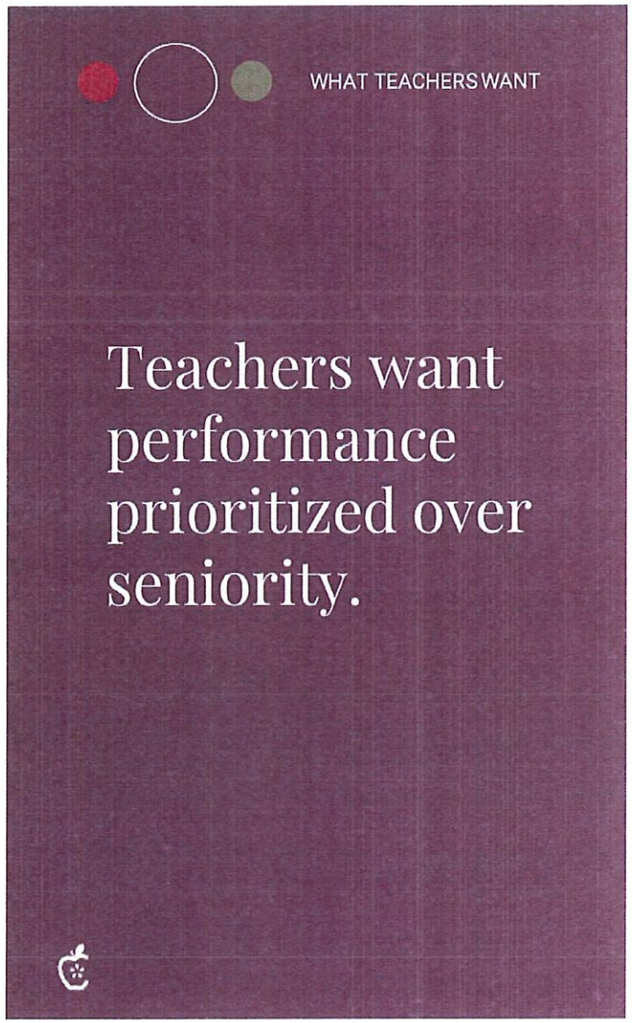
Teachers want increased teacher leadership opportunities and improved professional growth systems.

In 2020, 89% of teachers reported that opportunities to progress in their teaching career in terms of responsibility, authority, title, and/or increased pay (otherwise known as "career ladders") would make them more likely to stay in teaching.

In 2022, teachers of color chose improved professional learning and leadership opportunities as the top two mechanisms for retaining a high-quality diverse workforce, favoring them even more than higher salaries.

Teachers want to more strategically collaborate with other staff members.

In 2023, the most popularly desired resource for helping students overcome pandemic-induced learning setbacks was more support staff, and the most highly sought after professional learning support was how to effectively collaborate with those staff members.



Teachers prefer the use of **teacher performance** over **teacher seniority** in layoff decision-making by a 2-to-1 margin.

When presented with a series of nine options for approaches to reducing costs in the event of a financial downturn, including freezing hiring, offering "buyouts" to teachers near retirement, and laying off teachers based on performance, **layoffs based on seniority were the least popular option**.

E4E's "Voices from the Classroom 2023," nationally representative survey of 1,000 educators

Broaden opportunities for teachers to engage in the collective bargaining process beyond participating in a final vote

Solutions

And where we've seen them work

Expand focus of engagement beyond top union & district priorities

"It's a fairly normal process in a responsible union that there's a way of collecting priorities or interests. But when you're in charge, you construct the questions, and what you ask has a lot to do with what feedback you get." - Former union leader

Regularly communicate with teachers and the broader community, through public bargaining if appropriate

"I know from talking to teachers that they don't feel like there's transparency on what's at the bargaining table until there's stuff for them to vote on. They just know, this is dragging on, but we don't know over what." - Former district leader

"The world of work has changed dramatically for everyone except teachers. What it's like to work, the level of flexibility, the demographic makeup of the workforce. Teachers contracts reinforce a job that no longer makes any sense for people to be in. The strict rules applying to teachers don't fit what the rest of the world has evolved to become."

– National Nonprofit CEO

"Providence Public School District is overburdened with multiple, overlapping sources of governance and bureaucracy with no clear domains of authority and very little scope for transformative change. The resulting structures paralyze action, stifle innovation, and create dysfunction and inconsistency across the district. In the face of the current governance structure, stakeholders understandably expressed little to no hope for serious reform."

– Johns Hopkins 2019 Review of Providence Public Schools

Solutions

And where we've seen them work

Create opportunities for schools to opt into becoming "pilot" schools

Massachusetts: Allows school stakeholders to apply to become an "Innovation School," which has increased flexibility around: curriculum; budget; school schedule and calendar; staffing policies and procedures, including waivers from CBAs; school district policies; and/or professional development

Shift from opt-out waivers to school-based decision-making

Lawrence Public Schools: Stipulates all schools "shall have a teacher leadership team as the vehicle for shared decision making at the school level", with a district-established structure but which schools may propose modifications to; lists items determined at school level, including professional development, schedule, & class size

How do contracts and the relationships among the people who bargain them contribute to these outcomes?

1. Adversarial processes, including bargaining, prevent effective collaboration.

2. Teachers are seeking a different profession than their contract currently provides.

3. Rigid contract structures create barriers to innovation, such as team teaching models.

How can we meaningfully change the contractual process to drive transformational change?

1. Focus on relationships and create mechanisms for trust-building.

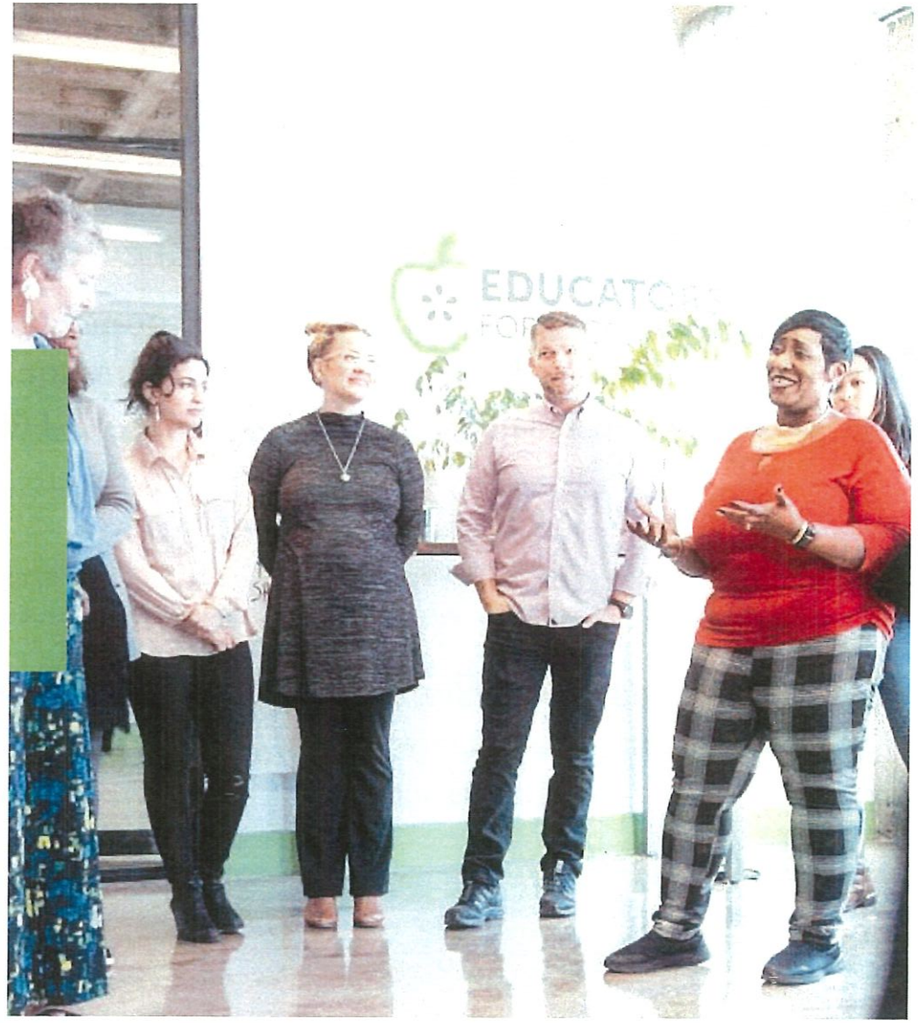
2. Authentically gather teacher perspective to transform teaching into the profession they seek.

3. Build in more opportunity for flexibility to allow schools to keep pace with a changing world.

Thank you!

estone@e4e.org

Appendix



Rhode Island

% of students proficient in 8th grade math down 5 points

National Assessment for Educational Progress, 2019 - 2022

% of students proficient in 8th grade reading down 4 points

National Assessment for Educational Progress, 2019 - 2022

41% of teachers chronically absent, 3rd highest in nation

Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-2016 report

29 % point gap between students of color and newly recruited teachers of color

People of color represent 52% of students, but just 18% of teachers recruited between 2018 and 2021

Providence

10.2% of PPS students proficient in math, 14.9% in ELA

2021-2022 state assessment scores in grades 3-8 and 11

16 % point gap between math proficiency of white & Hispanic students

24.5% of white students meet expectations on state math assessments, compared to 8.2% of Hispanic students

Student enrollment down 14% since 2017-2018

From 24,075 students to 20,725 last school year

69 % point gap between students and teachers of color

People of color represent 91% of students, but just 22% of teachers

November 14, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/3012?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/11.14/A.Alonso_20231117100618.pdf

Andres Alonso - Bio

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/11.14/Papay%20RI%20Senate%20Commission%20Testimony%20-%2011-14-23%20-%20Final.pdf

John Papay – Presentation

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/11.14/Rubinstein%20Testimony%20RI%20Senate%2011-14-23.pdf

Saul Rubinstein – Presentation

Meeting Summary

This meeting was the third and final meeting that had expert presentations from nine individuals who have specific content knowledge in the education field. At this meeting we had four more people present; John Papay, Annenberg Institute: Brown University, Peter McWalters, Former Commissioner, RIDE, Andres Alonso, Harvard University, and Saul Rubinstein, Rutgers University. The first person to present was Andres Alonso who is a Professor of Practice at Harvard University. Mr. Alonso discusses his knowledge on school reform and leadership instruction. He starts by addressing contracts and how they often have a perception of mistrust amongst unions. Likewise, he expresses how teacher's life experiences should be taken into consideration and can affect daily teaching instruction. He references his experience in Baltimore and Newark, notably establishing multi language learner curriculum and standards for these districts. An enormous engagement, a shift in resources, and better levels of autonomy for the operation of schools are suggestions to help end a state takeover. An open dialogue began with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes; the sense of urgency and finding a particular leadership style. The second presentation was Saul Rubinstein, from Rutgers University. He discusses his experience with collaborative culture, structures, and systems. He starts by discussing the importance of collaborative partnerships which help with public school improvement and reform. Collaborative partnerships form on the basis of quality decisions, quality of solutions, quality of implementation and quality through educator voice. He presents different date that describes this type of collaboration management style. To conclude, he lists a variety of policy recommendations which include; Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships at the state, district, and school level, capacity building for collaboration, study tour of best practice, inter-district networks, and peer facilitation team. An open dialogue begins with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes; how to measure collaboration, mandates vs. collaboration, the

Saturn union contract, and European work councils. The third presentation was from John Papay, director of the Annenberg Institute at Brown University. His presentation discusses the current moment in RI education, building professional standards for a highly effective teacher workforce, and promoting strong labor-management relationships. Mr. Papay emphasizes that teachers are the most important school-based factor in students' learning and development. He also states that improving instructional quality at scale requires organizational, not individual, responses. Mr. Papay closes by stating different opportunities for legislative involvement and policy changes. His key recommendations include possible legislative changes to tenure and evaluation law, capacity-building support for principal leadership, professional learning, and interest-based bargaining, and lastly incentives and inducements for teacher time and collaboration and hiring. An open dialogue begins with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes the following; seniority vs. performance, peer assistance and review, school-based hiring, teacher tenure and evaluation systems, teacher application pool data, and expanding the scope of collective bargaining. The fourth and final presentation was from Peter McWalters former commissioner for the Rhode Island Department of Education. Mr. McWalters discusses his time as the commissioner and what the system looked like at the time. He states the system was never set up for all students, rather to only serve about 40%. We are not a "progressive distribution system." He talks about Montgomery, Alabama which Mr. Papay referenced as well as a great example to mirror here in Rhode Island. Mr. McWalters talks about his time participating in the Hope High School project and how well it worked. During his leaderships, he references how accountability was different and community-based decision making was important. An open dialogue begins with Chairman Zurier. Notable dialogue includes the following; a shared sense of urgency, financing for capacity, community involved problem solving, and Australia's education structure.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 14, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge - State House

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. John Papay – Director, Annenberg Institute: Brown University
III. Peter McWalters – Former Commissioner, RIDE
IV. Andres Alonso – Former Professor of Practice, Harvard University; Former Deputy Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education
V. Saul Rubinstein – Director, Collaborative School Leadership Initiative: Rutgers University
VI. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

TELEVISION AND LIVESTREAM INFORMATION

The meeting will be televised by Capitol Television on: Cox Communications, channels 15 and 61 for high definition; i3Broadband (Formally Full Channel) on 15; and Verizon, on channel 34. Livestreaming is available at https://www.rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx.

POSTED: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023, 1:50 P.M.

Andres A. Alonso

Andrés Alonso is the former Professor of Practice and Visiting Professor of Practice at Harvard's Graduate School of Education (HGSE), where he taught on driving change, school reform, and the leadership of instruction, and helped steer the Education Degree in Leadership Doctorate (Ed.L.D.) and the Certificate for Advanced Education Leadership (CAEL) programs from 2013 to 2019. He is currently the special trustee of the Public School Districts' Opioid Recovery Trust.

Dr. Alonso served as co-chair of the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP), a collaboration among HGSE and Harvard Business School (HBS), faculty of other Harvard schools, and senior leadership teams from the nations' largest school districts. He led the Baltimore City Public Schools as chief executive officer from 2007 to 2013. From 2006 to 2007, Dr. Alonso served as deputy chancellor of teaching and learning, and from 2003 to 2006, as chief of staff for teaching and learning at the New York City Department of Education. Before working in the Baltimore and New York City public school systems, Dr. Alonso taught and supported programs for special needs and English language learners in the Newark, New Jersey, public schools.

Dr. Alonso earned a BA from Columbia University and a JD from Harvard Law School and practiced law in New York City before entering the teaching profession. He received a doctorate in education from Harvard in 2006. He is a recipient of numerous awards, among them the Teachers College's Medal of Distinguished Service. He is currently trustee of the Data Quality Campaign, the Panasonic Foundation, the Center for Collaborative Education, and the Grow Your Own Center, as well as Scholastic Corporation. He is also a former trustee and chair of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and a former trustee of the William T. Grant Foundation and of Teachers College of Columbia University, among many other institutions. He is also past chair of the Reporting and Dissemination Committee of the National Assessment Governing Board.

Supporting Teachers through Professional Standards and Labor-Management Collaboration

RI Senate Commission Testimony

John Papay

November 14, 2023

ANNENBERG
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Copyright 2023 Brown University

Three main topics

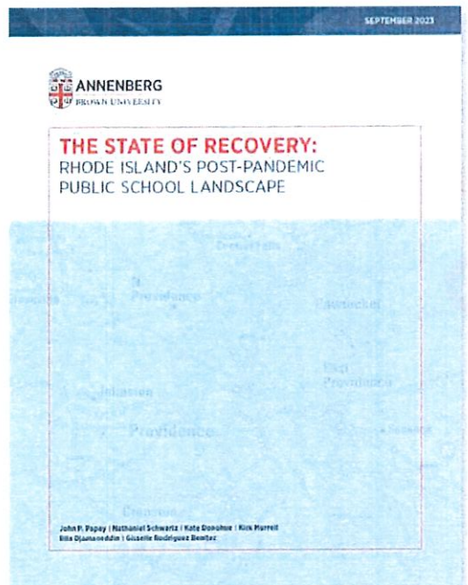
- Current moment in RI education
- Building professional standards for a highly effective teacher workforce
- Promoting stronger labor-management relationships

Key recommendations

- Possible legislative changes
  - Tenure law
  - Evaluation law
- Capacity-building support
  - Principal leadership
  - Professional learning
  - Interest-based bargaining
- Incentives and inducements
  - Compensation structures/levels
  - Teacher time and collaboration
  - Hiring
  - Seed joint labor-management collaboration

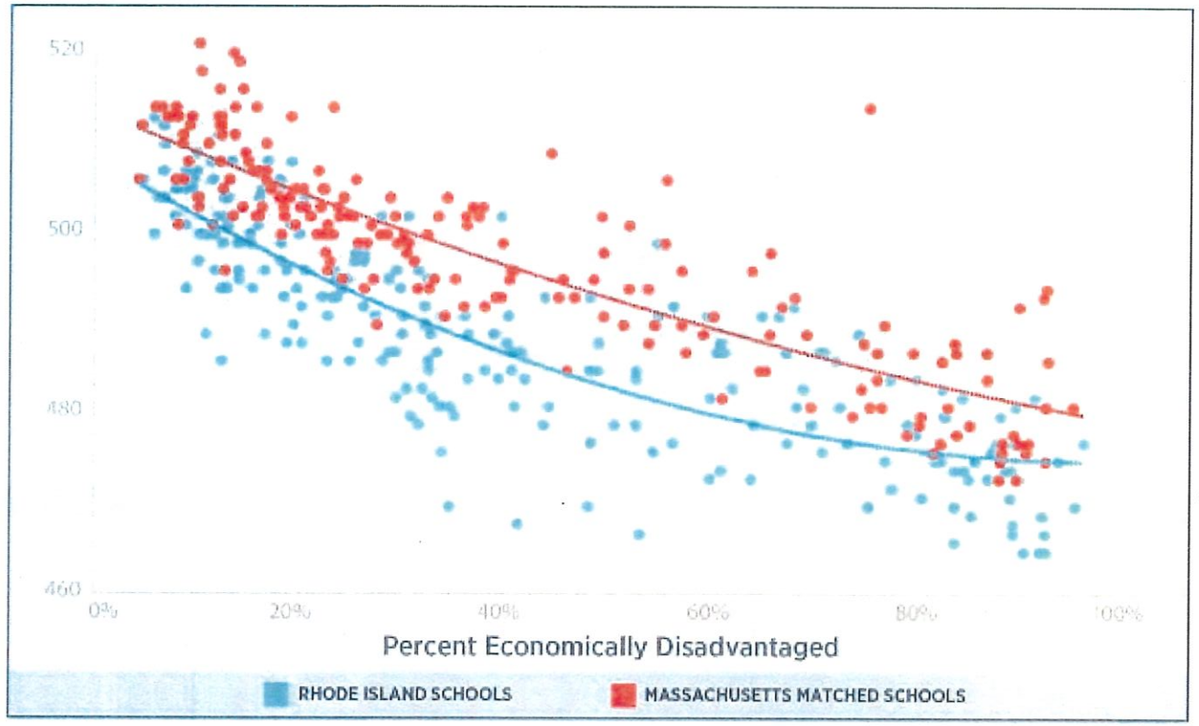
Current moment in Rhode Island education

Leveraging COVID to create opportunities for dramatic improvement in RI education

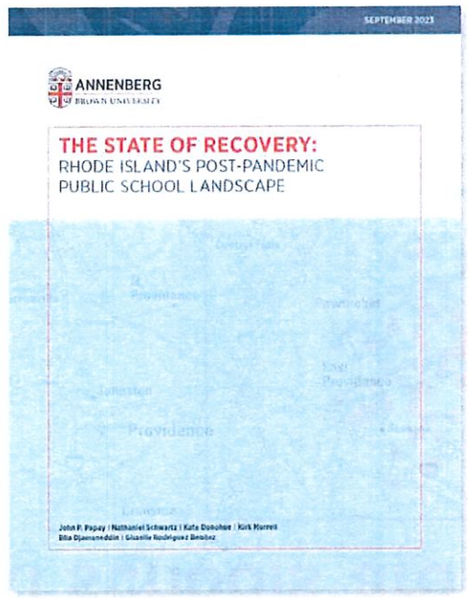


- Dramatic disruptions across the whole system
- Longer-standing trends
- Collective responsibility
- Statewide challenges

We compare schools serving similar students. RI schools are behind MA peers across the state.



Leveraging COVID to create opportunities for dramatic improvement in RI education



- Dramatic disruptions across the whole system
- Longer-standing trends
- Collective responsibility
- Statewide challenges
- System-wide approaches
- Coherence and stability

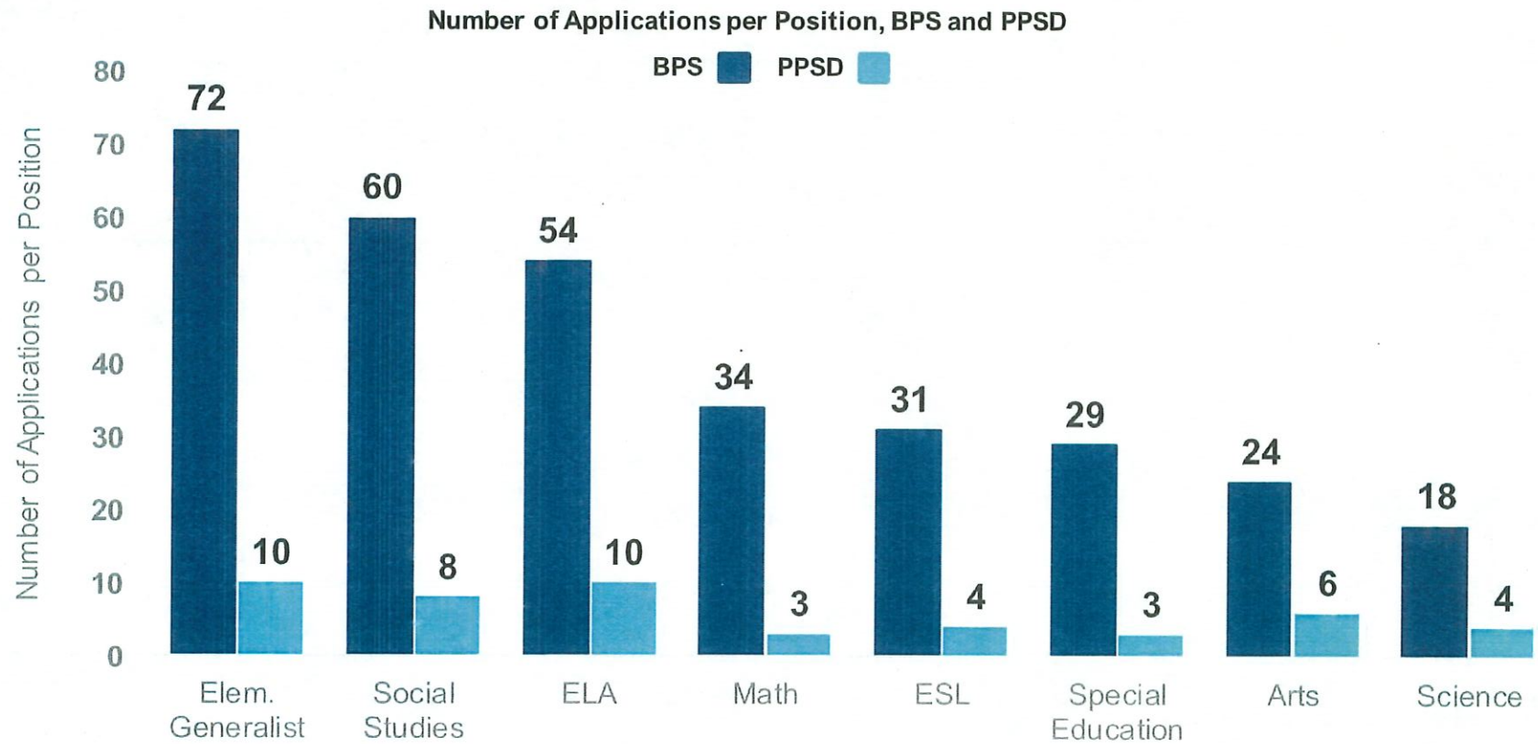
Key Theme

Investing in educators is critical.

Teachers are the most important school-based factor in students' learning and development.

Building professional standards for a highly effective teacher workforce

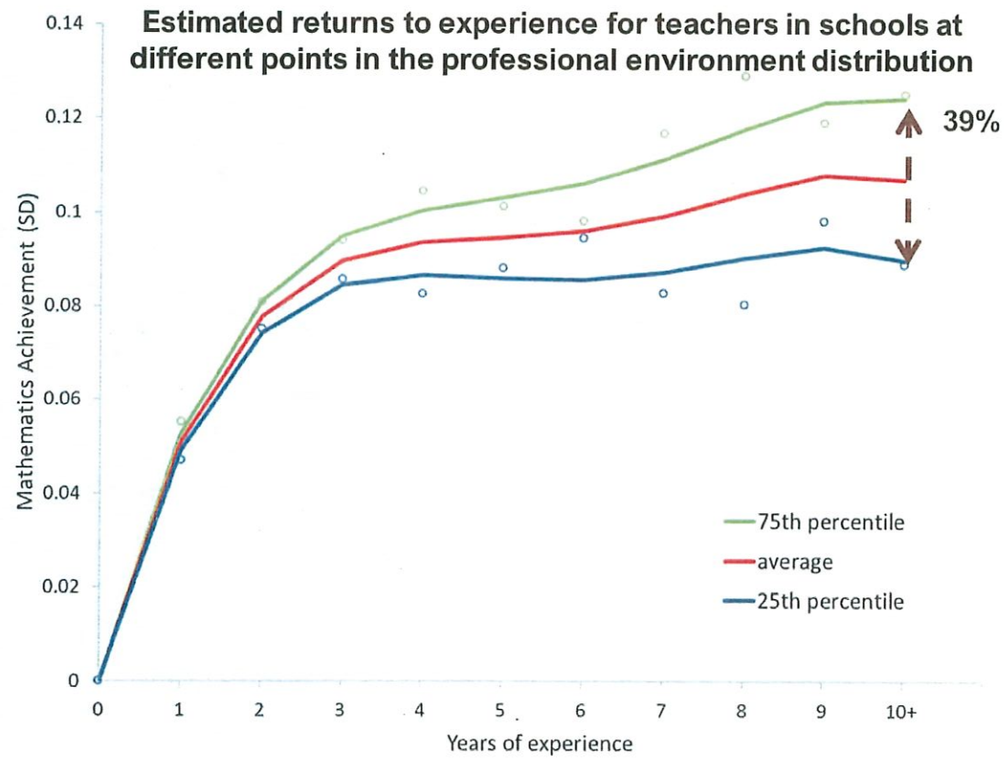
The teacher applicant pool is particularly thin in Providence



Boston: James, Kraft, & Papay, 2023 (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*)
PPSD: Donohue, Papay, Schwartz, & Murrell, 2023 (Annenberg Research Brief)

Improving instructional quality at scale requires organizational, not individual, responses.

Teachers improve more in supportive work environments



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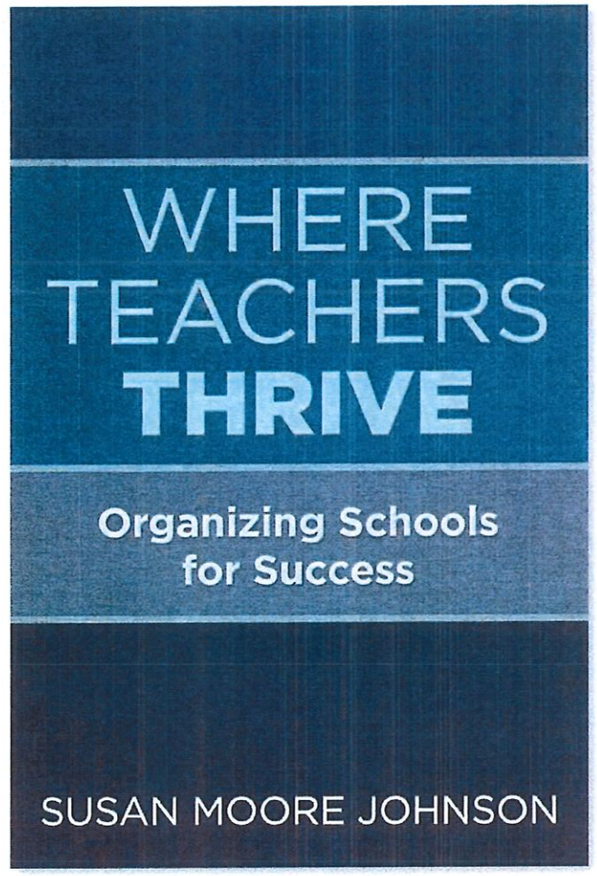
Kraft & Papay, 2014 (*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*)

annenberg.brown.edu

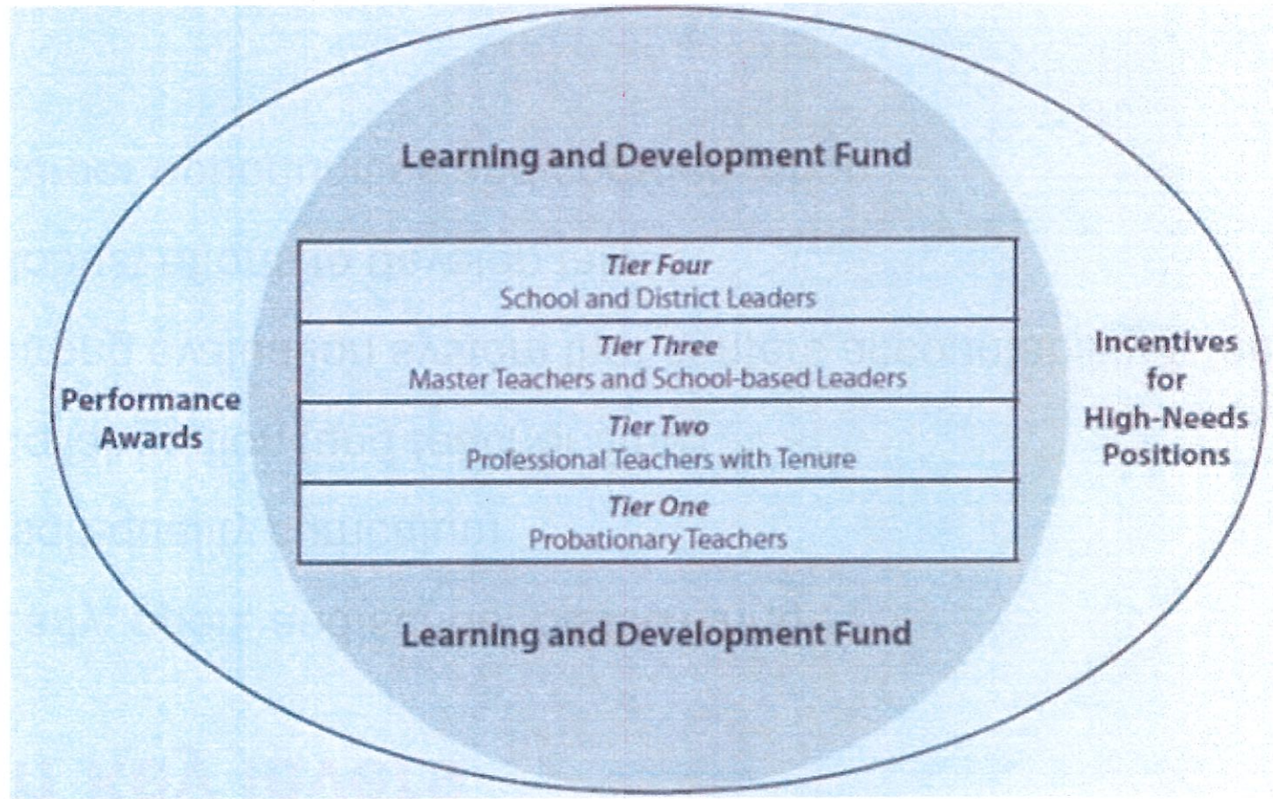


"In no other field is the basic organization of professional work as spare and rudimentary as in the school. Professionals working in other large-scale enterprises … are not left on their own to develop their skills, devise their strategies, and serve their clients as they see fit."

Seven key levers

1) Early, open, and school-based hiring
2) High-quality curriculum
3) Collaboration (and teacher time)
4) Strong evaluation system that centers accountability & feedback
5) Robust efforts to develop talent
6) Career opportunities and compensation

Tiered Pay-and-Career Structure



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Johnson & Papay, 2009, *Redesigning Teacher Pay: A System for the Next Generation of Educators* annenberg.brown.edu

Seven key levers

1) Early, open, and school-based hiring
2) High-quality curriculum
3) Collaboration (and teacher time)
4) Strong evaluation system that centers accountability & feedback
5) Robust efforts to develop talent
6) Career opportunities and compensation
7) **Supportive and inclusive leadership**

Opportunities for legislative involvement

Creating policy

- High-quality curriculum
- Tenure law
- Evaluation reform

Capacity-building support

- Leadership development
- Professional learning
- No unfunded mandates

Inducements and incentives

- Compensation levels and structures
- Teacher time and collaboration
- Hiring

Promoting stronger labor-management relationships

Better bargaining processes can help promote collaboration

- Move from industrial to interest-based bargaining
- Bargain on a broader set of issues (expand scope)
- More community engagement in bargaining, either directly or via joint subcommittees to do work outside of bargaining sessions

Collaboration is easiest around common areas of agreement

- High-quality equitable instruction
- Supportive work environments
- Teacher leadership

"If they're going to come and teach in my district for 5 years, I want to make sure they're really good. I want to make sure that, if I have to go to the mat for them, I can say this is someone who has given her heart and soul to the kids in Montgomery County.... But I'm not going to do that for just anybody."
- Montgomery County Union President

Collaboration can be created by working together

- Peer Assistance and Review

> "The union, without batting an eye, says, 'If you're not doing the kids any good and we can't help you come up to that level, then you're not doing the rest of us any good.'"
> - Rochester Union President

Collaboration is easier when funding is more plentiful

"You can only move in these progressive ways when you've taken care of the old-fashioned bread-and-butter issues. So you've got to be delivering raises. You've got to be delivering good old-fashioned due process. You've got to be delivering and making sure that they're not paying $500 a month health care out of their pockets. You've really got to be delivering on bread-and-butter issues. Then you can move in a progressive way."

– San Juan (CA) union president

Opportunities for legislative involvement

Creating policy

- Center effectiveness not seniority in personnel decisions
- Community engagement

Capacity-building support

- Training for IBB
- Funding to support PD

Inducements and incentives

- Substantial grants for joint labor-management initiatives across the state (including PAR)

Limits of (and opportunities in) state law

- Implementation
- Culture
- Discourse

Questions?

Contact Info: john_papay@brown.edu

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

Legislative Commission on Professional and Labor-Management Standards in Providence Public Schools

Rhode Island Senate

Saul Rubinstein
Rutgers University

November 14, 2023

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Research Overview

- Research Evidence on Collaborative Partnerships
  - Benefits to Student Performance
  - Benefits to Teachers
    - Turnover, Attraction, Retention
- Collaborative Culture, Structures, Systems
- NJ Public School Collaborative

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Union-Management Collaborative Partnerships and Educational Quality

Public School Reform/Improvement based on:

- District-level, School-level, Faculty/Staff Union-Management Partnerships
- Empowering Educator Collaboration in Schools
- Shared Decision-Making, Goal Alignment, Discretion, Educator Voice
- Innovation from Educators within Districts & Schools
- With Focus on Teaching and Learning

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Why Collaborative Partnerships?

- Quality of Decisions
  - People Closest to the Problem
- Quantity of Solutions – More Resources Devoted to Improvement
- Quality of Implementation – More Support
- Quality through Educator Voice

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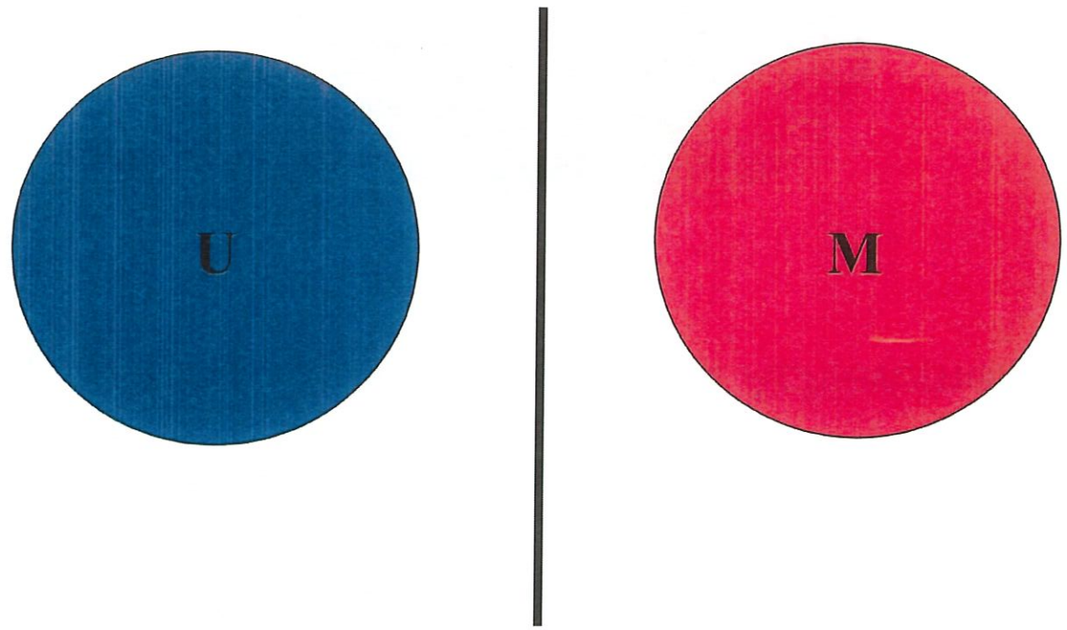
Institution for Conflicting Interests: Collective Bargaining



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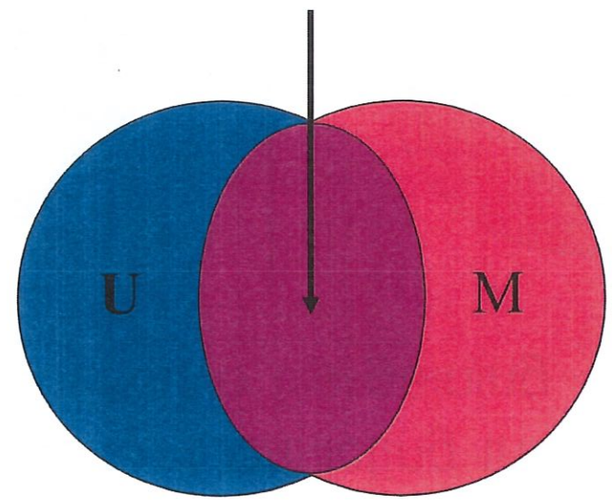
Institution for common interests?

Collaborative Partnerships

(Teaching Quality and Student Achievement)



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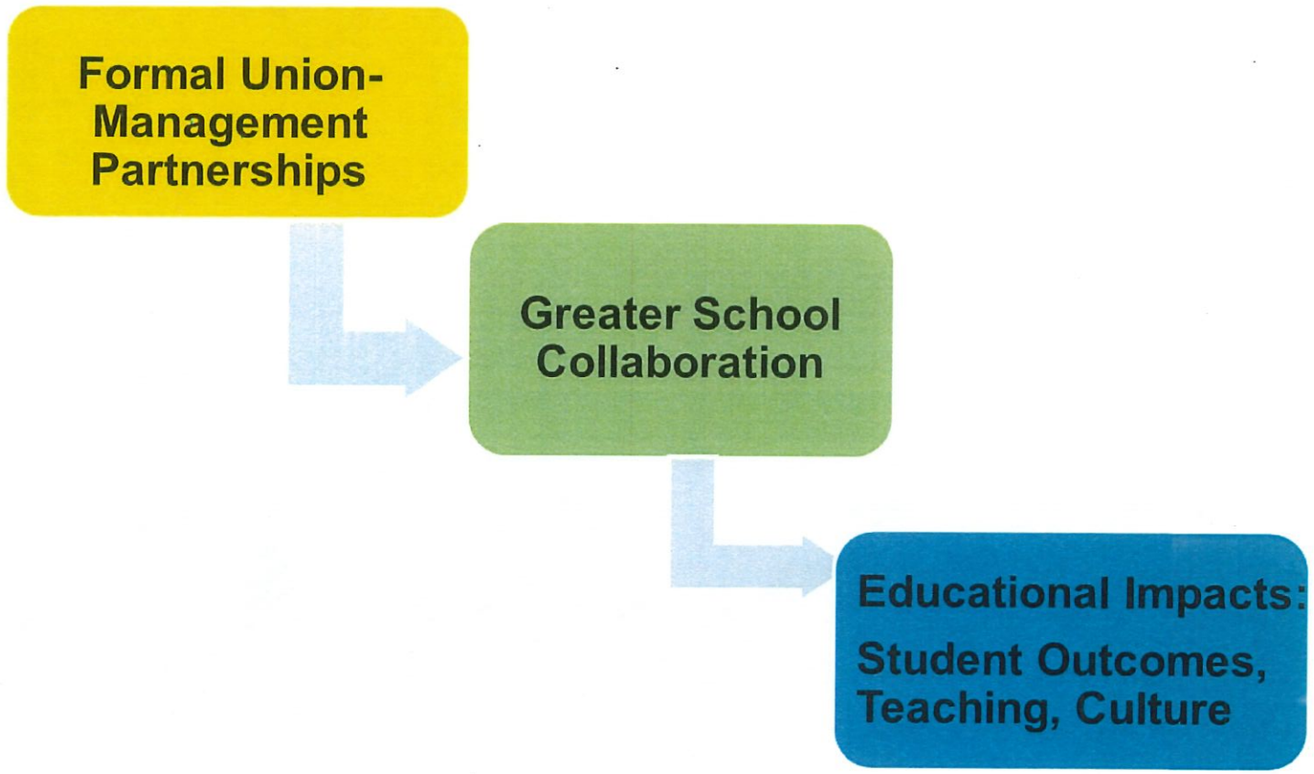
Union-Management Partnerships as Antecedent to School Collaboration



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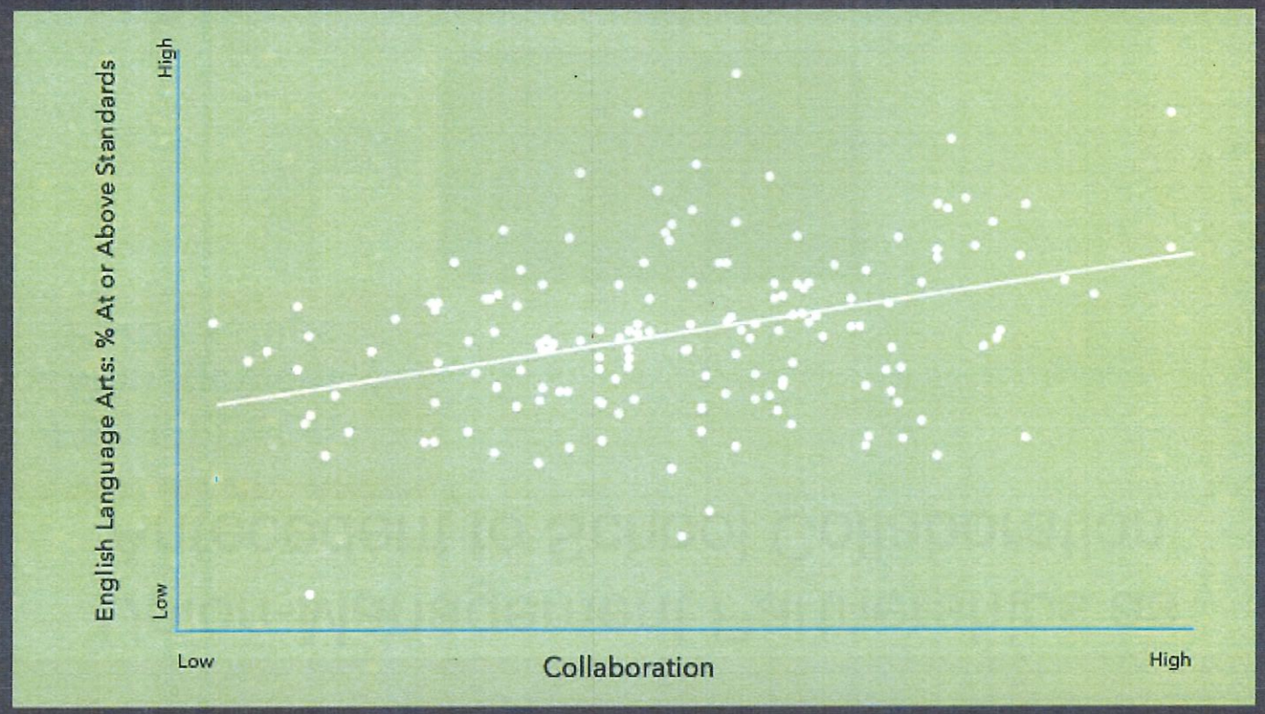
Collaboration and Student Performance



(McCarthy and Rubinstein, 2017)

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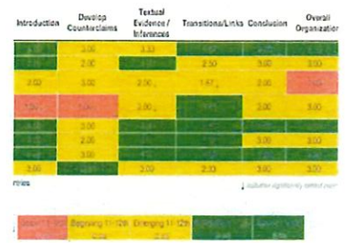
WHAT ARE EDUCATORS COLLABORATING AROUND?

Student Performance Data



Curriculum Development

Instructional Practices

Mentoring

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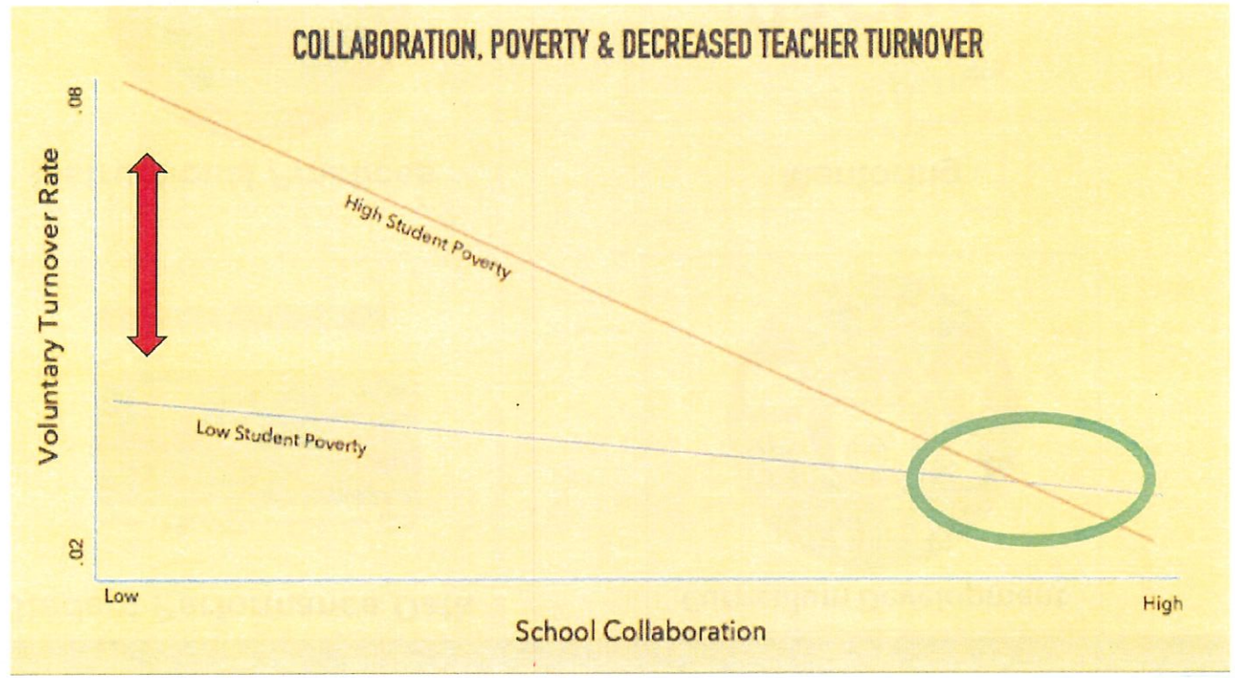
Collaboration eliminates the negative



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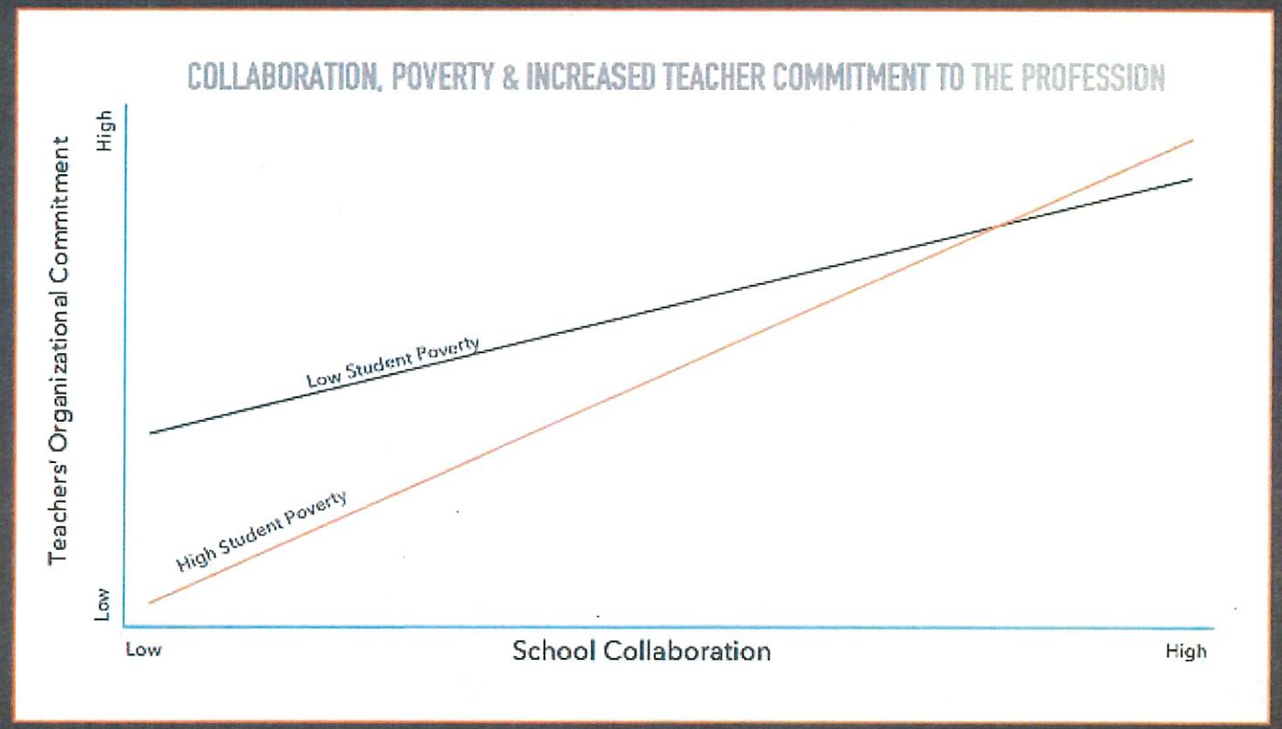
COLLABORATION MITIGATES THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF POVERTY ON TEACHER COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION



(McCarthy and Rubinstein, 2017)

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Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- Teachers' Efficacy
- Goal Alignment
- Shared Decision Making
- Discretion
- Principal as Resource
- Union Rep as Resource
- Psychological Safety
- Mentoring
- Problem Solving

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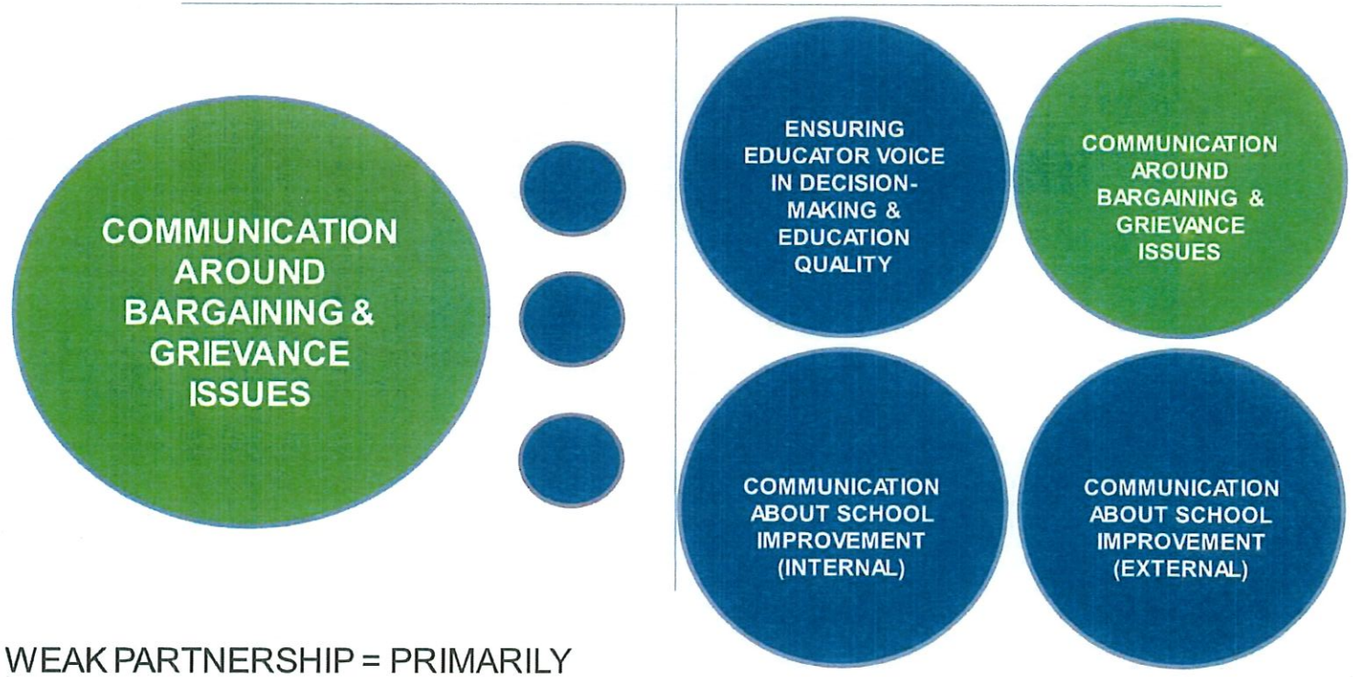
ASSOCIATION REPS: CHANGING ROLE PERCEPTION



WEAK PARTNERSHIP = PRIMARILY PERCEIVE ROLE AS FOCUSED ON TRADITIONAL UNION ACTIVITIES

STRONG PARTNERSHIP =MORE BALANCED ROLE

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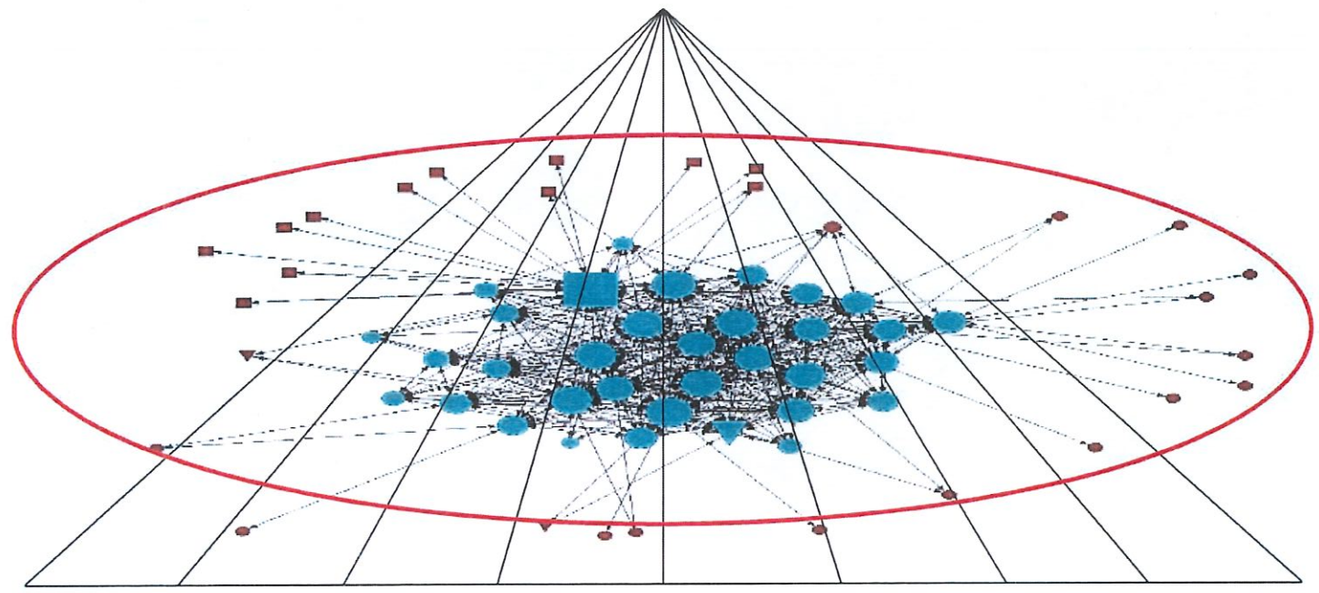
Partnership as Organizational Network



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Types of Improvement Initiatives

- New Curriculum
- Technology
- Sharing Instructional Practice
- Math & Language Performance
- Professional Development
- Energy Conservation
- K-12 Articulation
- Exam Coordination
- Mentoring
- Textbook Selection
- New Teacher Induction
- Peer Assistance
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Covid-19
- English as Second Language
- Student Advisory Periods
- New Courses
- Scheduling
- Homework Policy

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New Jersey Public School LABOR MANAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE

NJSBA

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To Date:

- 25 Districts
- 158 Schools
- 475+ Administrators
- 9,241 Teachers
- 99,552 Students
- Adding 6-8 Districts 2023-24
- 10% of NJ Districts

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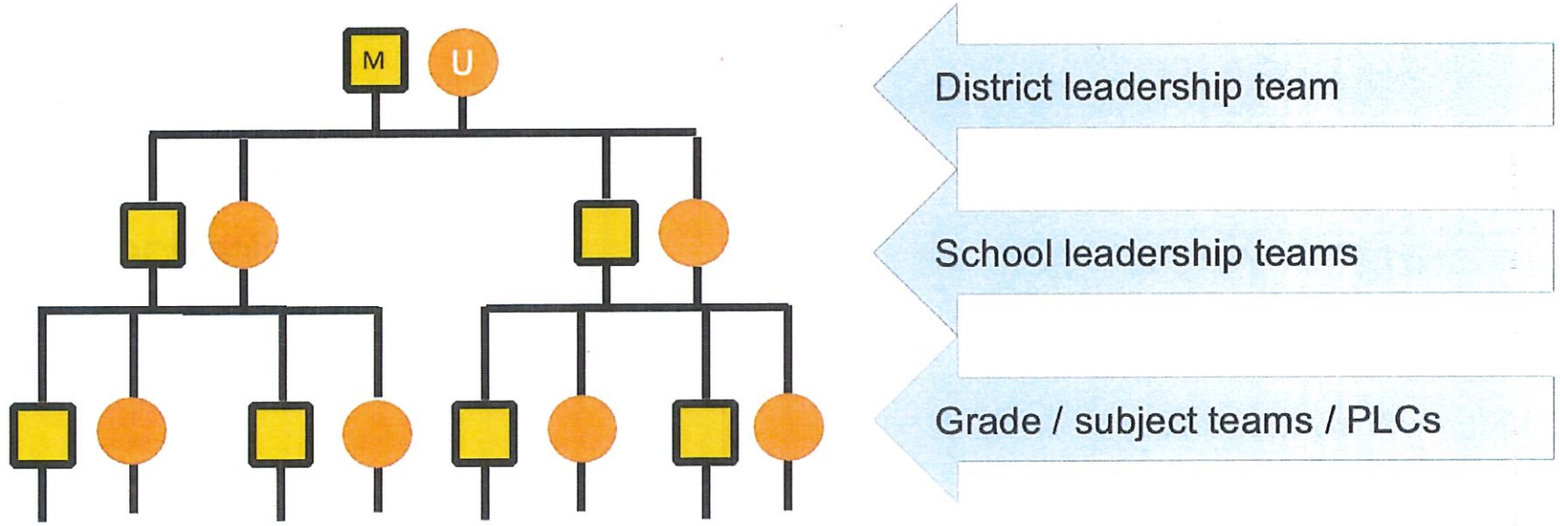
Structures



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The Web of Support:

- Inter-District Learning Network
- Peer Facilitators
  - Capacity Building Workshops
- Role-alike Networks
  - (Boards, Superintendents, Union Leaders, Principals)

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DEMOCRACY AND REFORM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE CASE FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

SAUL RUBINSTEIN CHARLES HECKSCHER JOHN McCARTHY

RUTGERS

Policy Recommendations:

- Promote/encourage Multi-stakeholder (State, School Boards, Superintendents, Principals & Supervisors, Union, Parents) Partnerships at each level:
  - State
  - District
  - School
- Capacity Building for Collaboration
- Study Tour of Best Practice (peer to peer starter yeast)
- Inter-district Networks
- Peer Facilitation Team

November 28, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/3584?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/11.28/D.Audette%20Testimony_20231129111256.pdf

Dina Audette – Testimony

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/11.28/E.Qazilbash%20Testimony_20231129111155.pdf

Emily Qazilbash – Testimony

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentation's related to the Commission's charge at each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal of these meetings was to prepare and discuss themes for the commission draft report which would be reviewed in the new year. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 28, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentations related to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

Dear commission members

I am submitting testimony for use by the members of the commission on Providence Public School District (PPSD)'s schools because I am unable to come to testify in person due to my teaching schedule at Brown University. Previous to taking my current position of Professor of Practice in Education at Brown in 2019, I served as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Capital in Boston Public Schools where I was at the negotiating table on behalf of the Boston School Committee for multiple rounds of union-district contract negotiations, including co-leading negotiations in 2018-19.

It is with perspectives gained from these experiences that I send my comments about ways that the state legislature can support efforts to have an effective teacher in every classroom and an excellent principal in every school. I suggest that the commission focus efforts in three main ways, considering statewide:

(1) career ladder legislation, which can provide leadership roles for excellent teachers and then provide / encompass support for new teachers; a longer timeline for the achievement of tenure; and easier dismissal processes for teachers, especially in cases where districts have formed a Peer Assistance and Review program,
(2) specific layoff language that will enable districts to retain excellent teachers and preserve the diversity of the workforce they have worked to build over the past years, and
(3) support for recruiting, preparing and supporting effective principals.

These recommendations are grounded in considerations about where to best locate decision-making power for strong outcomes for students - in some cases it makes sense to locate decision-making power at the school level with the principal and teachers, and in other cases it may lead to better outcomes to have strong legislation that outlines a framework and creates incentives for schools or districts to create programs and structures that are likely to lead to stronger learning conditions for students. I write these suggestions based on the research that identifies the strongest school-based influence on student learning to be first the

teacher and second the principal, and in consideration of how to create the policy structure to support teachers and principals and their growth.

(1) **Career ladder legislation considerations:** I've been doing work with superintendents in different states to improve teacher retention and have been really intrigued by states that have put in place frameworks for career ladders. These frameworks outline parameters for each district to negotiate with their union a ladder that meet the needs of experienced highly-effective teachers, experienced teachers in need of support, and newer teachers who are still actively learning. One state to look to, for example, is the state of Maryland with The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Pillar 2: High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders); their career ladder legislation lays out a framework that - if negotiated and implemented well - can set teachers up both to shape the ways they spend their days how they prefer, with differentiated jobs, and to receive the support that they need. With this type of framework, the state can create the conditions needed to have the highest quality teacher in every classroom.

A state-wide career ladder can help districts accomplish several things:

- Establish competitive salaries for teachers, setting a floor and also providing for higher salaries for teachers who take on leadership roles;
- Orient human capital processes around teacher effectiveness instead of years of experience, enabling highly effective teachers who take on leadership roles based on their skill level and areas of expertise;
- Provide incentives and support for districts to create Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs in order to give teachers the ability to set a high bar for their peers' performance and a structure within which to provide the support for their colleagues. These programs are anchored by a panel of teachers and administrators who together hire Consulting Teachers who will coach and evaluate teachers who need support;
- Enable, if desired, new teachers to co-teach for part of the day with a highly-effective teacher, thereby providing opportunities for a coaching role for a teacher leader and a learning environment for a new teacher;
- Create at the state level the organizational structures that support strong teaching and enable teachers to continuously improve. Although the school principal will ensure

implementation of these structures, the state can provide templates for common planning time and create professional development sessions on teaming;

- Lengthen the timeline for tenure in the state statute. Provide intensive professional development for new teachers and then evaluate them more rigorously (more often and/or with a different procedure) than tenured teachers. Five years after they are hired, evaluate teachers for tenure with an intensive review by exemplary teachers and administrators. Dismiss teachers at this point if they've been provided with intensive support and are not reaching a high bar of performance. Ideally, consider doing all of this within the structure of PAR;
- Again, ideally utilizing a structure such as PAR, create state legislative language that makes it easier to get rid of probationary teachers in the state of RI. If a new teacher has been provided intensive support and then evaluated by a highly-effective teacher and still isn't meeting a high bar for performance by the end of their fourth year, enable the district to let that teacher go with minimal process;
- Likewise, within the structure of PAR, make the bar for teacher dismissal lower if a panel of teachers and administrators agree that a teacher should be dismissed;
- Provide differentiated professional development for teachers who are struggling or have more room to grow and enable highly effective teachers to create and provide that professional development. Through a career structure, create flexibility in the contract to create those conditions differentiated based on the effectiveness of teacher;
- Invest in professional development and in high-quality curriculum and lesson plan support at the state level. Invest in research around effective teaching and disseminate that knowledge;
- Consider providing some flexibility in the school day for teachers, for example to provide some online tutoring, etc. When these flexibilities are created as part of a career ladder, teachers' roles can be differentiated to meet the different needs of students and also to meet the different needs of teachers at different stages in their career.

(2) **State-level layoff language:** Consider rewriting state law on teacher layoffs to require school districts to consider factors other than seniority when laying off teachers. These factors could include linguistic proficiency, or preparation through a grow-your-own program

that the district has created, or an evaluative review by the Consulting Teacher in the PAR program. This language will help provide districts with some flexibility to retain their most effective teachers and maintain a diverse workforce rather than to risk losing teachers their students need in the event of a layoff.

(3) **Focus on preparing and supporting excellent school principals**: Excellent school leaders will create the conditions that help teachers thrive. Research has shown that effective school leaders are not only essential in attracting and retaining teachers, but they also have been shown to create the conditions that lead to improved student achievement. The state can play a role in preparing individuals with excellent leadership potential, providing cutting-edge professional development and coaching, and supporting leaders with skills to run their buildings.

Statewide programs to develop principals can take advantage of economies of scale and create an academy that (1) structures organizational partnerships between programs and districts, (2) supports learning in cohorts or networks, (3) creates authentic learning opportunities, including an opportunity for aspiring principals to be coached, and (4) supports principals in learning how to improve school-wide instruction and support collegial teaching and learning environments (Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

Rhode Island's context is unique, and a structural focus on teachers and principals will depend on existing state statutes, priorities and the way that the commission chooses to structure incentives for districts. By focusing on state level policies that will enable districts in Rhode Island to support and grow exemplary teachers and then keep the teachers who are most effective with students, Rhode Island will be best positioned to improve learning outcomes for students.

Emily Kalejs Qazilbash, EdD

Also have consulted in two capacities: previously at MA DESE writing state regulations, and currently across the country in teacher retention, learning what teachers need to stay in the profession and working with superintendents and their leadership teams to design structures and conditions to support teachers' success so that they will stay and thrive. Bringing you my perspective of research and best practice around creating the conditions to ensure kids in PPSD (or RI?) have the same.

References and messy notes:

General Law Title 16 here

Rhode Island General Laws, Title 28, Chapter 9.1, which is known as the "Rhode Island Teacher Collective Bargaining Act." link here:

http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE28/28-9.3/28-9.3-2.htm

Change it so that the state controls teacher compensation, and that the law should be amended so that governance structures look more like what's spelled out in MA's law

State policy: funding allocations, standards and accountability policy development, PD, salaries, infrastructure investment, early childhood education, special education services, facilitation of parental involvement, mental health support, data and research, wraparound services

Nov 20, 2023

Dear Senate Committee,

I am writing to discuss the Professional Development provided by the district for teachers. So far this extra time has not been beneficial and I would like to focus on one main area of where this has not helped teachers.

This school year (2023-2024) the district has brought in Canvas as a new LMS (Learning Management System) replacing Google Classroom. This is the technology hub where all assignments and grades should be posted for teachers and students, but ultimately all grades go into our universal grading System, Skyward.

According to the district, this year teachers are only "required" to use Canvas for grading purposes. All grades from Canvas will sync into Skyward nightly. Teachers were given a 3 hour PD the week before school started with representatives from Canvas. Teachers were expected to be able to use this platform the very next week.

I feel very comfortable speaking about the teacher training of a LMS because during the pandemic I was a core member of the team who helped to facilitate training for teachers to learn how to use Google Classroom to be able to teach with this platform to teachers at the secondary level. I taught the basics of posting assignments, using forms and slide decks to grading and syncing grades to skyward plus more enhanced activities.

My issues with this roll out of Canvas are two fold:

1. Canvas was rolled out to teachers with the expectation that it was supposed to **only be used for grading purposes this year**, This still means you had to enter an assignment, even if students were turning it in on paper, into Canvas, to grade it. It would then Sync with Skyward overnight automatically.

a. <u>But alas, that was not the case.</u> We soon found out that the Sync overnight button had to be turned on, which hardly anyone in the district knew about **because of our lack of training**. In addition, there was an additional step that was there to set up a correlation to our weighted categories to Skyward. This step ensured that our grading categories were properly syncing to Skyward. There were so many teachers at the secondary level that they had to send out a science teacher leader to show people how to do this procedure. The teachers who had not done this correctly, and to my understanding the list was extremely long, grades did not match their grades in Canvas so many students' grades DID not match during the progress report time. This was fixed for "most" teachers just a few days before the end of the quarter 1 grades closing.

   i. *Once I understood this process I made a quick tutorial video and sent it out to my colleagues to help them with this process. Many learning types, some needed step by step written instructions, some needed to be shown, others needed to each it being done to complete the task.*

2. Additionally,more importantly, teachers were under the expectation that they were only using Canvas to grade with BUT quickly it became a requirement from Social Studies and ELA that assessments MUST be taken through Canvas.
   a. These assessments had to be imported through Mastery Connect or Commons and Graded on Canvas.
      i. If you think I am speaking another language to you, that is how teachers felt. This is a new platform where we received three hours of training and we are getting emails with directions on how to take these tests and administer them.

As an educator of students and a trainer of adults, I know first hand you can't send directions in an email and expect teachers to understand how to do this procedure that is somewhat complicated on a platform that is very complex. Teachers, very much like our students, have many different learning levels. They are coming from and need

differentiation. Requiring them to give these assessments in Canvas is fine but not without the proper training.

Since the beginning of the school year there has not been ONE training session on Canvas for teachers. We had 3 hours before school started yet our entire life revolves around Canvas. Grading is an integral part of what we do. For teachers giving these assessments and for all the teachers living off the results, let alone working with the data from the DMG groups, it is imperative that they run correctly.

To this day teachers are STILL asking for help, still not able to post assessments, grades and other things. Teachers are BEGGING for training.

*To note there was a self paced module on Canvas that teachers could go to, during their own time, to learn Canvas. This is not high quality instruction that we would expect for our students, so why would we give it to our teachers?

Mrs. Dina Audette,

Roger Williams Middle School
Teacher Leader of Social Studies
Technology Support Teacher (TST)
RWMS Webmaster
Canvas Foundational Framework Badge K-12
Google Certified Educator Level 1 & 2
Kami Certified Educator Level 1 & 2

December 4, 2023

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/3656?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/12.4/Z.Scott%20Notes%20120423_20231205095933.pdf

Zachary Scott – Notes

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentation's related to the Commission's charge. At each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal of these meetings was to prepare and discuss themes for the commission draft report which would be reviewed in the new year. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, December 4, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentations related to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Essential design features of Peer Assistance and Review:

- **Responsibility for novice and/or experienced teachers**: PAR programs can either focus support on novice teachers, experienced teachers in need of support, or both.
- **Carefully designed and committed PAR Panel:** The PAR Program needs to have a joint labor-management "PAR Panel" consisting of members of both the union and management. Typically, there are equal numbers of union and management (with or without an "extra" person who is jointly recommended) to run the program. Panels typically meet monthly throughout the year to hear reports about teacher progress, troubleshoot program functioning, and to make recommendations about the future employment of teachers in the program.
- **Solid process to hire consulting teachers**: One of the most important tasks of the Panel is to jointly hire Consulting Teachers. These CTs must:
    - be expert teachers who have skills in coaching teachers,
    - be chosen through a competitive process,
    - earn a stipend on top of their regular salary
    - be released full-time (some programs do part-time, but there are major drawbacks), and
    - be responsible for a caseload of 12-20 teachers.
- **Thorough consulting teacher job description:** The work of the CTs is supported by the members of the PAR Panel. The CTs:
    - observe their teachers in the classroom and provide the support they think will help them succeed in meeting PPSD's standards
    - conduct formal observations and keep detailed records about each teacher's performance, including information about student performance - the measures of student growth and performance that the Panel will examine should be agreed upon before the CTs begin their work, and that information about student performance becomes central to the assessment of teachers in the PAR program
    - based on these assessments, write comprehensive reports, documenting each teacher's progress in meeting the district's standards
    - present their reports to the PAR Panel and recommend whether the teachers in their caseload should be rehired or dismissed for PAR Panel members to vote
- **Inclusion of a review and dismissal process**: The "R" of PAR - "review" - is critical to maintaining teacher quality (Shueler 2023). There should be an agreement made between the union and the district that if a teacher enters PAR and receives support for a specific number of months and if the PAR Panel agrees that the teacher has not made adequate progress in reference to the evaluation standards that that teacher can be dismissed on an expedited timeline.

Sources: Harvard Graduate School of Education PAR Website, Susan Moore Johnson (content here); Chetty et al (2014); Schueler (2023); Papay and Kraft (2014)

Peer Assistance and Review for Administrators

While not an exhaustive search, I was only able to locate one district with a PAR for administrators program - Baltimore County Public Schools. A description of the program is pasted below, with more information here:
https://www.bcps.org/dos/organizationaldevelopment/leadership_development/peer_assistance_and_review

The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program for Administrators is designed to serve as an opportunity to provide feedback to principals and administrators on their growth and development as aligned to the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSELs). The program will provide new principals and administrators who need additional support on identified PSELs with targeted support over the course of their Evaluation Support Cycle year. The PAR Program will enable the Executive Director (DoS ED) and the Consulting Administrator (CA) to meet at least five times per year in the PAR Panel Team to share leadership artifacts, discuss progress related to the improvement plan and review observational data collected.

Philosophy

The Peer Assistance and Review Program for Administrators acknowledges that administrative leadership is complex, changing, and essential to creating optimal school environments. The Peer Assistance and Review Program for Administrators will enable leaders to build their capacity through a variety of coaching opportunities.

Goals

The Peer Assistance and Review Program for Administrators is designed to achieve desired goals that include:

Providing a comprehensive system for developing and evaluating administrators and supervisors;
Setting clear expectations about the roles and responsibilities for Consulting Administrators (CAs) and Department of Schools Executive Directors (DoS EDs);
Describing professional growth opportunities to support and nurture all administrators and supervisors;
Creating a dynamic collaborative structure for critical reflection, development, and continuous growth; and
Providing explicit and ongoing feedback in order to elevate opportunities to reflect on practice.

The success of the Peer Assistance and Review Program for Administrators is dependent upon a professional culture in which mutual respect, teamwork and trust are the tenets of its continuous improvement.

December 12, 2024

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/4299?site=1

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentation's related to the Commission's charge. At each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal of these meetings was to prepare and discuss themes for the commission draft report which would be reviewed in the new year. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, December 12, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion among Commission members reviewing public comment and expert presentations related to the Commission's charge
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

January 22, 2024

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/147?site=1

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion and review among Commission members of the draft Commission report. At each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal these meetings was to gain feedback to change and edit the draft report, with the end of goal of voting and accepting a final report in the spring. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Notice of Meeting

DATE: Monday, January 22, 2024
TIME: 5:00 P.M.
PLACE: Senate Lounge – State House

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this meeting.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

The meeting will be televised on Capitol Television, which can be seen on Cox Channels 15, and 61, in high definition on Cox Channel 1061, on Full Channel on Channel 15 and on Channel 34 by Verizon subscribers.

It will also be live streamed at https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/

POSTED: THURSAY, JANUARY 18, 2024, 2:20 PM

January 29, 2024

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/173?site=1

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion and review among Commission members of the draft Commission report. At each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal these meetings was to gain feedback to change and edit the draft report, with the end of goal of voting and accepting a final report in the spring. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, January 29, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

February 5, 2024

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/201?site=1

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion and review among Commission members of the draft Commission report. At At each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal these meetings was to gain feedback to change and edit the draft report, with the end of goal of voting and accepting a final report in the spring. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, February 5, 2024
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

March 18, 2024

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/8946?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/3.18.24/Lusi%20to%20Commission%202024.03.18.pdf

Sue Lusi – Absence Letter

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Documents/2023/PPSD%20Study%20Commision/3.18.24/Letter%20%20Senate%20Commission%203182024.pdf

Maribeth Calabro - Statement

Meeting Summary

This meeting is a series of seven meetings of the Commission designated for discussion and review among Commission members of the draft Commission report. At each meeting, Chairman Zurier would lead a round table discussion where each member would be able to give their contributions on the record, followed by an open dialogue. The main goal these meetings was to gain feedback to change and edit the draft report, with the end of goal of voting and accepting a final report in the spring. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes and was necessary to begin drafting the commission report.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, March 18, 2024
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Discussion & Review of draft Commission Report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this time.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Providence Teachers Union
AFT • AFL • CIO

March 18, 2024

Good evening, Senator Zurier and fellow Commissioners:

My apologies for not being here this evening, but I was at a leadership conference with my professional Union. Upon reading this second draft, I was initially at a loss for words, finding little to no changes after serious concerns and several suggestions from the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers, the Providence Teachers Union, and our siblings from the National Education Association RI have been raised.

As we started on this journey months ago, I was cautious, guarded, and somewhat curious as to the charge of this Commission. Still, we participated with our full attention and interest, focusing on the hope that this Commission could effectuate changes that would serve to support teachers and elevate new opportunities to give our students the education they deserve. However, it became immediately clear that the outcomes of this committee had been predetermined, and its mission had nothing to do with student success but rather an attack on collective bargaining and Providence teachers. The level of personal privilege and opinions asserted without data throughout this process has been astonishing. The Providence Teachers Union has provided evidence of the solutions-driven negotiating items that we continue to bring to the table since the beginning of this Takeover. Yet, there is zero mention of any of these efforts or mention of the initiatives we have tried to collaborate on over these past four years, including, but not limited to the creation of a professional development program with RIFR and AFT support to fulfill the obligations of Rhode Island general law and the Right to Read Act (that was dismissed out of hand because it was created by the union and in its place millions were spent on a LETRs contract). There was no acknowledgment of the work our union has done with families and the community to engage in conversations that are relevant to improving our schools (coffee at the curb, Town Hall Meetings, attending community meetings), no acknowledgment of the hundreds of resignations that we have endured under this Takeover of teachers not leaving the profession but leaving the district to be welcomed and valued for their broad ranging skills and talents, no acknowledgment or recognition of the fact that teachers are not allowed to choose curriculum but are so disrespected that we are told precisely what to teach or what day for an allotted time from highly scripted curriculum products that have taken the joy of learning and teaching.

It has been made abundantly clear from its Inception that this commission's charge has been an attack on Providence Teachers and their collective bargaining rights. Perhaps I, too, should have written an op-ed of revisionist history waxing nostalgic to a time when Mr. Smith was president and did nothing to promote

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• **Maribeth K. Calabro,** President • **Marianne W. Davidson,** Executive Director of Member Services • **Alex Batres,** Field Representative • **Christopher A. Pride,** Field Representative • **Stacy Lopes,** Secretary • **Michelle M. Fleet,** Business Manager
www.providenceteachersunion.org

his aspirational recommendations neither in the House where he served for over a decade nor in his role as president. Two people who walked away from the district when things started to get tough are now returning to impart their wisdom and beliefs when neither have lived through a Takeover nor have they taught in decades let alone in a post-pandemic world.

Perhaps Providence teachers would have been better served by me on this Commission if I had been able to wax nostalgic on the way things used to be, pre-Takeover and pre-Covid, but alas I did not. I have listened to the "bad teacher narrative" from Commissioners who admittedly have no understanding, no experience, and no evidence to substantiate such rhetoric. There has been no evidence, facts or data cited to support the assertion that increasing the time it takes to reach tenure will do anything to increase student students' success.

Over the past month, I have witnessed over 300 teachers displaced, through no fault of their own, apply to positions in their school or within the district. Looking at the hard data from these displacements, it is clear that ageism is afoot, as in Redesign schools over 40% of teachers displaced are over the age of 40. Yet, the report attacks seniority and ignores the experience, dedication, hard work and thousands of hours of professional development that more seniors bring to their craft every day. All because you hate the word seniority. Every other District in the state values and celebrates veteran teachers for the skills and the talents that they bring to their students every day. Since the beginning of the school year, through the term of this Commission, we have also closed two more schools in our District. And while few have rung the alarm bell of crumbling schools louder than we have over the past 10 years, and welcome the idea of newer and fewer, we are concerned about the process by which these closures happen. The process by which schools are closed excludes the very people we serve, parents, families, community, teachers and our students. Our families, communities, students are further marginalized by these exclusions. We, along with state and community leaders, families and students demand a process for school closures that is inclusive rather than exclusive of the people we serve, which would have made an actionable and acceptable recommendation for this Commission.

During this process, Massachusetts has been referenced within this Committee as models for contract language and academic achievement and while there are great things happening in Massachusetts, little mention has been made of how they got here. Twenty-five years ago, they made a plan and stuck with it, they supported the foundational plan with financial backing through legislation and regardless of who was in educational leadership positions from Commissioners to superintendents they stayed with their plan.

The same cannot be said for Rhode Island or Providence Schools with every new leadership team, from Governor to Commissioner comes change. Changes in mission, vision, curriculum product choice etc. We literally course correct ever three years. How can we expect to effectuate long-term, sustainable, meaningful change when we are constantly pivoting. The constant churn of leadership coupled with the unfunded and underfunded mandates and fiscal obligations not being met by city and state leaders have done nothing to improve Providence Public Schools as a whole. But know this, the very teachers being criticized and the very contract you are trying to destroy are coming to work every day with one focus and that is educating our students so they may be successful, well-rounded individuals who show the world that they are more than a test score; they are leaders, thinkers, creators, builders, readers, dreamers, scientists, mathematicians, musicians, artists, and anything else they aspire to be. Our teachers make that happen not legislation, no Op-eds and not regulations. Teachers, plain and simple.

In closing, on behalf of the professional teachers of the PTU, I reject this document in its entirety and want this letter attached to the final report so it is abundantly clear what the PTU thinks and feels about this wasted opportunity. We had another chance to do something great with this Commission, and it was squandered to satisfy the desires of leaving a legacy and circumventing the collective bargaining process rather than focusing on supporting teachers and providing the fiscal support necessary to create schools where our students are not only thriving but have opportunities and access to more than the bare minimum.

I will be named on the committee as an attendee only, as it is clear that no considerations, suggestions, or feedback from PTU or RIFT have been included in this document. As a result, I will no longer be attending any future Commission meetings, as I can effectuate more positive change in my district by focusing on the needs of our students and teachers in collaboration with PPSD.

Professionally,

Maribeth K Calabro

Maribeth K. Calabro
President
Providence Teachers Union
A Union of Professionals

March 18, 2024

Dear Commission Members,

I'm sorry not to be with you this evening. I had a medical procedure today that precludes my attendance, so this letter will need to suffice.

I strongly support the commission report as presented. It presents a compelling vision for Providence Schools, one in which:

- Providence Public Schools will provide a work environment that will attract and retain high quality educational professionals.
- All educators within Providence Public Schools have a shared commitment to provide all children with a quality public education.
- All educators have a meaningful voice and collaborative role in fulfilling their shared commitment.
- Teachers have a responsibility to maintain high professional standards, and they have the authority and responsibility to support their colleagues in meeting them.
- All educators are personally accountable for the quality of their contribution to this shared commitment.

Achieving this type of collaboration, collective responsibility and shared accountability among the adults -- administrators and teachers -- in the school system is crucially important to improving student outcomes in Providence. Labor and management have long been at odds in Providence, and this has to change.

The report provides a balanced way forward to begin achieving this vision, including changes through collective bargaining to create the conditions and expectations for collaboration, building capacity, and recommending some important legislative changes that will remove barriers to collaboration.

Some commission members and some who testified before us have said that you can't legislate collaboration. While it is true that legislation is not by itself sufficient, based on my experience trying to forward collaboration in Providence as superintendent, working in partnership with then union president, Steve Smith, I can say that legislative changes are absolutely necessary to the effort. Collaboration that is completely voluntary and personality driven will not last over time, as is shown by the lack of staying power of our efforts and the fact that little has changed in Providence since the publication of the PROBE Commission report in 1993.

I will close by underscoring the importance of each of the proposed legislative changes:

- *Amend R.I.G.L. §16-13-6 (specifically for Providence Public Schools), which currently mandates that all layoffs due to declining enrollment must be made exclusively on the basis of seniority.* Teacher quality is the most important within school factor for student achievement. As we heard in the testimony, seniority is not synonymous with quality.
- *Streamline (specifically for Providence Public Schools) the due process requirements under the Rhode Island Teacher Tenure Act (R.I.G.L. §16-13-4) to consist of arbitration*

under a specified timeline. The inability to have expedited due process under the law curtailed our efforts in Providence to build a robust and meaningful peer assistance and review process because time consuming and expensive due process requirements remained even after labor and management had jointly agreed that a teacher should be removed.

- *Amend (specifically for Providence Public Schools) R.I.G.L. §16-7-29, which mandates a salary schedule "recognizing years of service, experience, and training."* The current statute precludes building out career ladders that reward initiative and taking on additional responsibilities because the bulk of dollars allocated to salaries are dedicated to paying annual steps. The salary schedule Mr. Smith and I were negotiating would have required a change in state law.
- *Creat[ing] statutory authority for site-based innovation schools* is one way to create charter-like flexibilities in traditional public schools -- something important to achieve in all schools as explained in the report.
- My preference would be that the recommendations outlined in this report could be done absent use of the Crowley Act or a similar analogue to the Massachusetts receiver act. However, the testimony heard and the examples used point to the importance of threatened intervention to make some of these more dramatic changes. State authorities should be clarified to provide greater impetus for collaboration because again, collaboration cannot be lest up to personal preference.

Finally, I support aligning administrator accountability with professional unionism. Collaboration and collective responsibility are two-way streets. They need to be a requirement for all parties.

Thank you, and I'm sorry to miss this evening's session.

Regards,

Sue Lusi

May 6, 2024

https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/9209?site=1

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Desktop/Letter%20of%20Support%20for%20Senate%20Report%20FINAL.pdf

City of Providence – Letter of Support

file://gacifs/Users/mdimaio/Desktop/M.Tremblay_20240507115924.pdf

Marcus Tremblay – Absence Letter

Meeting Summary

This meeting was the last meeting of the Senate Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-Based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of The Providence Public Schools. Senator Zurier called the meeting to order and started a dialogue of closing remarks. It is important to note Commissioner Sencer notably opposes the final draft of the report. A motion was made by Commissioner Rogel and seconded by Senator de la Cruz. The policy staff took a roll call vote with 10 votes in the affirmative and 1 in the negative, approving and accepting the final report. This concludes the final meeting of the commission.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, May 6, 2024
TIME: 5:00 PM
PLACE: Senate Lounge

AGENDA

I. Call meeting to order
II: Discussion/Consideration of report
III. Adjournment

There will be no public testimony at this meeting.

Please contact Morgan DiMaio in the Senate Policy Office (mdimaio@rilegislature.gov) for any questions regarding this meeting.

Morgan Dimaio

From: Marc Tremblay <marcusdtremblay@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 5, 2024 7:12 PM
To: Morgan Dimaio
Subject: May 6th Commission Meeting

Dear Morgan Dimaio,

Tomorrow is the final rehearsal of my spring performance at Trinity Rep, and so I will be unable to attend the meeting until 6:10. I have talked to Senator Zurier, and he told me that in the case that the vote on the report occurs before my arrival I should send an email stating my position. So I would just like to state in case I miss the vote that I would vote yes on the report.

Thank you,
Marcus Tremblay

Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 6, 2024

Senator Samuel D. Zurier
Senate Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St
Providence RI, 02903

Dear Chairman Zurier and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Office of Mayor Brett P. Smiley, Providence City Council and Providence School Board commend the efforts of Chairman Zurier and the Special Legislative Commission to Review and Provide Recommendations for Professional and Labor-Management Standards that Provide School-based Flexibility and Accountability for Employees of the Providence Public Schools for their efforts drafting and editing this report.

The report provides a detailed account of national best practices concerning labor-management relations, professional standards, school-based flexibility and educator accountability, as well as recommendations for how Providence and Rhode Island can adopt these practices to support a school district that better serves Providence students. We recommend that all members vote for the passage of the Commission's report.

The central recommendation of the report is for stakeholders to work collectively to improve our educational system as Providence recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 and continues to operate under state intervention. Empowering educators who have dedicated their careers to teaching and mentoring students in Providence is central to these findings. We support the report's recommendations to best support these educators, including the adoption of teacher and management leadership teams at schools, increased school autonomy, peer assistance and review, and development of a career ladder. These steps will help Providence attract and retain education professionals who are committed to providing all children with a high-quality public education.

The report also affirms that to support a professional educator workforce, leadership must create a collaborative atmosphere and environment where teachers feel empowered and respected. Together, district and school-based administrators must work as partners with teachers to create effective school teams, improve student learning outcomes and promote teachers' professional growth and mastery. We must also recognize and remove the barriers that exist for young

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educators and particularly educators of color to thrive in this field in order to build a workforce that reflects the lived experiences of Providence's diverse student body.

The in-depth review of the Springfield Empowerment Zone (SEZ) within the report provides a case study for Providence to emulate when considering how to build a sustainable foundation for improving Providence Public Schools. The SEZ offers a successful model of school-based management and holding schools accountable for results. The SEZ includes a collective bargaining agreement that includes a career ladder with incentives for leadership, recognizes exceptional performance by teachers and streamlines reassignment for teachers and staff who have been displaced. We feel a great sense of urgency to deliver high-quality public schools for thousands of students in Providence and believe that school-based autonomy and accountability is necessary for rapid improvement.

We commend Chairman Zurier for his engaged and thoughtful leadership on this Special Legislative Commission. This report is the culmination of in-depth research and expert testimony from educators, researchers and education policy experts, and provides a pathway that is aspirational but achievable on how Providence stakeholders may work together to collectively improve our educational system. Investments in better labor and management for teachers will lead to evident progress on student outcomes and goals outlined in the Turnaround Action Plan, and we respectfully ask the commission to vote for passage of this report.

Sincerely,

Mayor Brett P. Smiley
City of Providence

Council President Rachel Miller
Providence City Council

President Erlin Rogel
Providence School Board

SENATE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECCOMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FELXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMISSION QUORUM ROLL CALL

Meeting Date: May 6, 2024 — Commission called to order at: 5:12 pm.

Meeting Time: 5:00pm — Commission adjourned/recessed at: 5:58 pm.

COMMISSION MEMBER	*Party*	PRESENT	ABSENT
SENATOR SAMUEL ZURIER *CHAIRPERSON*	*Democrat*	X	
SENATOR MEGHAN KALLMAN	*Democrat*		X
SENATOR JESSICA de la CRUZ *SECNATE MINORITY LEADER*	*Republican*	X	
ZACHARY SCOTT	N/A	X	
LISA ODOM-VILLELLA	N/A	X	
THOMAS KERR-VANDERSLICE	N/A	X	
JUSTIN ROIAS	N/A	X	
ERLIN ROGEL	N/A	X	
WOBBERSON TORCHON	N/A	X	
JERMEY SENCER	N/A	X	
NIRVA LaFORTUNE	N/A	X	
MARCUS TREMBLAY	N/A	X	
STEVE SMITH – *EX-OFFICO*	N/A	X	
SUE LUSI – *EX-OFFICO*	*N/A*	X	

Minimum Number of Members Present to Constitute a Quorum
7

ATTENDANCE TOTALS

13	1
PRESENT	ABSENT

SENATE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECCOMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FELXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMISSION ACTION ROLL CALL

Meeting Date: 5/6/52024 | FINAL REPORT | *Sponsor:* N/A

PPSD DRAFT REPORT 3.7

MOTION / ACTION TAKEN ON REPORT

Motion made by Erlin Rogel **, seconded by Senator(s)** de la Cruz **for:**

☐ *Passage* ☐ *Passage in Concurrence* ☑ *Passage as Amended* ☐ *Passage as Sub* ____ ☐ *Continue*

☐ *Hold for Further Study* ☐ *Committee Heard* ☐ *Indefinitely Postpone* ☐ ____

VOTE OF THE COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEMBER	*Party*	YEA	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
SENATOR SAMUEL ZURIER *CHAIRPERSON*	DEMOCRAT	X			
SENATOR MEGHAN KALLMAN	DEMOCRAT			X	
SENATOR JESSICA de la CRUZ *SECNATE MINORITY LEADER*	REPUBLICAN	X			
ZACHARY SCOTT	N/A	X			
LISA ODOM-VILLELLA	N/A	X			
THOMAS KERR-VANDERSLICE	N/A	X			
JUSTIN ROIAS	N/A	X			
ERLIN ROGEL	N/A	X			
WOBBERSON TORCHON	N/A	X			
JERMEY SENCER	N/A		X		
NIRVA LaFORTUNE	N/A	X			
MARCUS TREMBLAY	N/A	X			
STEVE SMITH – *EX-OFFICO*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SUE LUSI – *EX-OFFICO*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

VOTE RESULTS

YEA	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
10	1	1	

EMPOWER schools

Local Control that Puts Students and Educators First

District-driven, community partnerships can empower Providence students and educators

Using democratic practices, collaborative cultures, and transparency to make decisions with input from students, families, and educators, Providence can create:

- ***District schools*** *that are*
- ***Sustainable****, implementing*
- ***Customized models*** *in service of*
- ***Holistic goals***

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This structure allows schools the flexibility to implement customized models

These clusters of schools

- have key design and **operating flexibilities** enabled and ensured by a partnership agreement
- are responsible for meeting **ambitious goals** set collaboratively with the district
- **remain part of the district** and continue to follow important district policies on matters such as enrollment.
- are **overseen by an existing or new nonprofit board** made up of local leaders and community members (often including district representatives) who help support and advocate for the success of the cluster of schools

Key partnerships provide targeted support and promote sustainability

Zones are managed by local, independent, nonprofits that:

1. Ensure schools have customized, impactful plans supported by building educators
2. Support school-level flexibility by advocating for and supporting schools and educators
3. Hold schools responsible for meeting ambitious, attainable goals

These organizations may be existing community leaders (e.g., universities);

Schools have the flexibility to implement customized models

Budget	• Educator teams control an **increased share of per-pupil revenue** and have the autonomy to make spending decisions in service of their students
Staffing	• Educator teams have the flexibility to **hire new staff** of their choosing, **determine staffing structures**, and **create new roles** that meet the needs of their school
Curriculum	• Educator teams can **adopt new and different curricular programs** and, using their budget autonomy, can **decide how and who will support** them in **curriculum adoption** and **instructional improvement**
Schedule	• Educator teams can **design schedules** and **school calendars** that meet the needs of their students and teachers - allowing for **increased teacher collaboration** and **professional development**, as well as additional time for **intervention** and **enrichment programming**
Culture	• Educator teams have the flexibility to **design a school culture** that is **aligned with their priorities** and with **student needs**. Schools can adopt programming or support structures of their choosing

These clusters can be implemented using existing public funding

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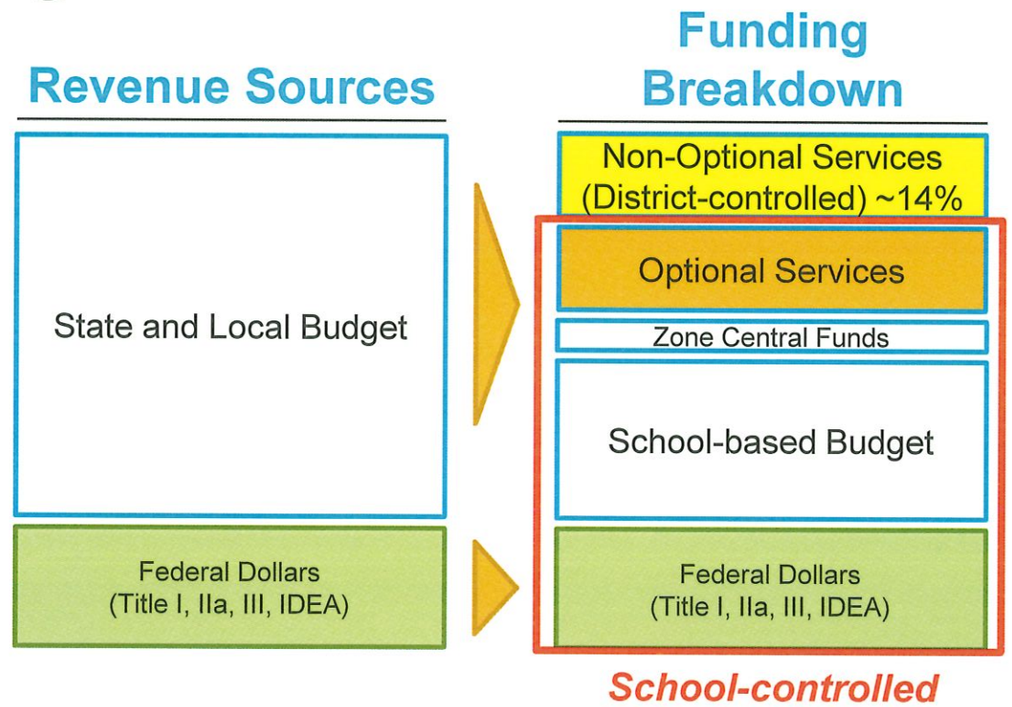

The schools remain district schools, not charters

Key Flexibilities	As Part of the District
• Clear goals and accountability structures • Flexibility to operate innovatively and to customize programming • Sustainability through a contract and board • Ability to attract and retain high-quality educators	• Work in service of district priorities • Use district facilities • Coordinate enrollment rules with district • Take advantage of district functionality (finance, transportation, maintenance) • Operates within district funding context • Unionized