

**Maximizing Returns on Rhode Island's
Education Investments:**

**Enhancing the Leadership and Collaborative
Assistance Capacity of the Regents and the Rhode
Island Department of Education**

A Management Consulting Report

Submitted to

The Rhode Island General Assembly

Submitted Through

The Rhode Island Board of Regents

Submitted by
Management Analysis & Planning
(MAP)

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Executive Summary

This report describes conclusions and resulting recommendations from a management analysis requested by the Rhode Island General Assembly and undertaken for the Rhode Island Board of Regents. The analyses were conducted by a private education consulting firm, Management Analysis & Planning (MAP) of Berkeley, California. Analyses were based upon reviews of relevant documents, budgets, and statutes, comparisons with other state education departments, and interviews with and systematic surveys of employees of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Regents, state legislative and executive branch officials, and numerous professional educators and informed members of the public. Analyses were conducted during February, March, and April of 1995.

Report Objectives

The purpose of this management consulting report is to enhance the ability of the Board of Regents and RIDE to provide (1) education leadership in Rhode Island and (2) collaborative assistance to local school districts in elevating student opportunity and education performance.

Report Theme

The report's principal theme is that Rhode Island need take only a few major, and not very costly, additional steps to realize a far greater return on its existing education investments. Currently, Rhode Island devotes less than one half of one percent of total state spending and approximately one percent of all public funds spent on education to the operation of RIDE. This is a relatively small amount of money. However, the state can acquire potentially huge leverage on the remainder of its education system spending by redirecting use of these resources toward more focused and productive ends.

Analytic Methods

In order to appraise the capacity of the Regents and RIDE to fulfill its existing education reform strategy, MAP engaged in a multipronged data gathering and analytic effort. This involved an extensive review of relevant documents, interviews with approximately 200 RIDE, Regent, and Rhode Island officials and informed citizens, observation of RIDE and Regent meetings, surveys distributed to all RIDE employees, survey questionnaires distributed to more than 1,500 individuals in local school districts, businesses, community agencies, and civic organizations, analyses of RIDE as an

organization, and comparisons of RIDE with education departments in three similar states, Connecticut, Delaware, and Vermont.

Analytic Findings

The above-described data gathering and analytic endeavors lead MAP to conclude that when judged against the crucial components of state leadership and education reform (specified on page 12 of this report):

(1) The Board of Regents has adopted and pursued an appropriate improvement strategy for Rhode Island public education.

(2) RIDE has built momentum in pursuing the Regents' reform strategy.

(3) A prior (1993) RIDE reorganization, while well intended, distributed the agency's attention over too wide a formal span and diluted a sense of purpose and accountability accordingly.

(4) RIDE needs far greater specificity in its implementation work plans.

(5) Added practical steps are necessary to sustain RIDE's momentum in moving from a regulatory and monitoring agency to a fully professional collaborative assistance organization.

(6) RIDE, and Rhode Island education, would benefit from greater and clearer support from Rhode Island's overall policy system. Regents could enhance RIDE's progress by concentrating more upon policy issues and less upon procedural matters.

(7) Rhode Island's interlocking system of personnel assurances via union representations, civil service protection, 20-year position guarantees, and judicial wrongful dismissal decisions contributes to an inflexible and overly bureaucratic system.

(8) There are existing conditions upon which RIDE's reform can continue to capitalize and which provide a basis for optimism regarding the future.

(9) Rhode Island has sustained a reasonable financial commitment to the support of public schools.

(10) Rectifying above-listed deficiencies is not unduly expensive, and, if needed changes were made, Rhode Island would reap substantially greater returns on the education investments it has already made.

Recommended Actions

Recommended actions are intended to enhance RIDE's mission, reduce organizational complexity, treat employees fairly, and remain within anticipated spending boundaries. The accompanying matrix summarizes recommendations and specifies the problems they are intended to address.

Recommendation Matrix

Recommendation

R I D E Impediments

	Diffused Mission	Workplan Ambiguity	Incomplete Professionalization	Policy System Ambiguity	Personnel Rights
I. Organizational Alignment					
A. Structural Streamlining	X				
B. Director Reduction	X				X
C. Interdivisional Cooperation		X	X		
D. Integrating Library		X			
II. Workplan Specificity & Operating Changes					
A. Professional Development					

Exchange Programs	X	X	X		
Brokering Expertise	X	X	X		
Workshops	X	X	X		
Summer Institutes	X	X	X		
Special Projects	X	X	X		
B. Collaboration					
Curriculum Standards	X	X	X		
Performance Assessment	X	X	X		
Curriculum	X	X	X		
Guides/Frameworks					
Instructional Materials	X	X	X		
Dissemination Strategies	X	X	X		
Textbook Review & Selection	X	X	X		
C. Organizational Assessment					
Accreditation Option	X	X	X		
Inspectorate Option	X	X	X		
D. Personnel System Reform	X	X	X		
E. Budget Discretion	X	X	X		
F. Internal/School District					
Fiscal Oversight	X	X	X		

(Recommendation Matrix—continued)

Recommendation	Diffused Mission	Workplan Ambiguity	Incomplete Professionalization	Policy System Ambiguity	Personnel Rigidities
III. Completing Transition to Collaborative Structure A. Mission Clarity B. Recruitment & Selection C. Position Descriptions D. Internal Professional Development E. Collective Bargaining Agreements F. Use of Task Teams G. External Appraisal H. Formal Personnel Evaluation I. Symbolic & Material Rewards J. Leadership Models	X	X X	X X X X X X X X X		
IV. Policy System Support A. Gubernatorial Actions 1. Symbolic Activities 2. Regental Appointments 3. Regental Nominations 4. Reinvested Resources 5. Infrastructure Renewal B. Legislative Actions 1. Symbolic Activities 2. Fiscal Discretion C. Regental Actions 1. Agenda Shift 2. Infrastructure Change 3. Schedule Streamlining 4. Performance Measurement D. Commissioner Actions 1. Communication 2. Clarification	X X	X X	X X X X X X X X X X	X X X X X X X X	

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Maximizing Returns on Rhode Island's Education Investments:

Enhancing the Leadership and Collaborative Assistance Capacity of the Regents and State Education Department

This report describes conclusions and resulting recommendations from a management analysis requested by the Rhode Island General Assembly and undertaken for the Rhode Island Board of Regents. The analyses were conducted by a private education consulting firm, Management Analysis & Planning (MAP) of Berkeley, California. Analyses were based upon reviews of relevant documents, budgets, and statutes, comparisons with other state education departments, and interviews with and systematic surveys of employees of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Regents, state legislative and executive branch officials, and numerous professional educators and informed members of the public. The analyses were conducted during February, March, and April of 1995.

The Growing Imperative of Leadership

Successful individuals and institutions exhibit two characteristics. They continually do the right thing and they do things right. When it comes to education, Rhode Island is clearly headed in the "right" direction. However, to do things "right" crucially requires a realigned and refocused organizational structure, added efforts at professionalization, more specific workplans, and added amounts of policy leadership.

Rhode Island is approaching a critical decision point. The economic and civic well being of the state and the standard of living and personal satisfaction of its citizens are going to be ever more crucially affected by the character and quality of its education system. A stagnant education system will translate for a society or region into a stagnant economy and declining hope for its citizens.

Rhode Island already is taking several of the necessary steps to ensure a successful transition to a high-tech, high skills world. For example, public spending on schools already ranks high. However, another kind of resource is crucially necessary to ensure that a new education system emerges.

Ensuring that the state's education system is continually pointed in the right direction, and elevating public understanding of the necessary next policy steps, is the single most important resource which will determine whether Rhode Island makes a successful transition to a prosperous 21st Century economy and fulfilling future.

The Evolving Context of Rhode Island Education

One economic era is coming to a close and another clearly is emerging. Once it was possible to hold a well paying job and to lead a comfortable middle class life even if one was not highly educated. However, the world's emerging high tech economy portends a new way of working and the necessity for possessing new sets of workforce skills. The future route to a comfortable individual standard of living and a productive statewide economy necessitates a workforce capacity consisting of higher order thinking skills, creative problem solving ability, technical literacy, teamwork, and an enterprising outlook.

The education system which can best contribute to this new world of work differs fundamentally from what now generally exists in Rhode Island (or, for that matter, in most other states). Successful schools of the future will continue to stress a wide variety of mathematical, literary, and communication skills, the new and improved 3 R's. However, they will proceed further to ensure that students are sophisticated regarding scientific and technological principles, social institutions, government interactions, international conditions, and, perhaps most importantly, the relationships among all of these. Acquiring, distilling, and applying a never ending stream of new information will become the highest skill of all and the skill most in demand. The distinction, already outmoded, between a college bound and vocational curriculum will someday likely disappear.

Preparing students for this emerging world will depend upon a new kind of school. Educators and their institutions will not simply need to be capable of equipping students with the new knowledge and skills, they will themselves have to become models of the emerging workplace. Teachers, administrators and others will no longer be able to succeed based upon previously acquired knowledge and skills. They must become part of an expanding flow of new knowledge and continually be able to acquire new skills. Being an integral part of networks, task group arrangements, professional associations, research collaboratives, and analysis teams will become as crucial for teachers as it is today for research scientists and technology entrepreneurs. In short, to be successful in preparing tomorrow's citizens and workforce members, *schools themselves will not only have to be able to teach, they will also have to be able to learn.*

The purpose of this management consulting report is to assist Rhode Island in making a transition to this new kind of learning school, in other words, to render educational institutions capable of providing Rhode Island with the thoughtful citizenry and productive workforce the future will demand.

A Comparison Snapshot of Rhode Island Education

Figure One below displays statistics which compare Rhode Island with other New England and nearby states. These figures will be referred to again later in this report. For now it suffices to note two conclusions. While not leading the field in terms of resource allocation, Rhode Island is in a competitive stance with its neighbor states, and its level of tax effort in generating public school resources is the highest of all in this group.

Figure One
Rhode Island Education Compared*

	RI	CT	DE	VT	MA	US
K-12 Enrollment	146,000	500,000	107,000	100,000	874,000	43.3 million
Pupils/Teachers	13.4	13.6	15.2	12.9	13.7	16.0
Mean Teacher Salaries	\$39,261	\$49,910	\$37,469	\$37,517	\$40,852	\$35,723
Mean \$/PP	\$6,764	\$8,429	\$6,587	\$7,212	\$6,802	\$5,730
(Adj/\$/PP)**	(\$6,121)	(\$6,621)	(\$6,202)	(\$7,512)	(\$5,373)	
30 Year*** \$/PP Growth (%)	236.73	290.88	184.19	329.17	233.23	207.14
Per Capital Effort****	0.339	0.310	0.297	0.382	0.286	0.285
% Ed \$ State Contributed	36.5	40.1	66.4	32.4	36.0	45.8

RI= Rhode Island
 CT= Connecticut
 DE= Delaware
 VT= Vermont
 MA= Massachusetts
 US= United States

* All data for 1993-94 school year, unless otherwise specified.

** Per pupil spending adjusted for state cost of living index.

*** Per pupil spending growth 1959-60 to 1991-92 discounting for inflation (constant 1992 dollars).

**** State per capita income divided into mean dollars per pupil.

**Figure Two
Rhode Island Education Comparison 1993***

State Education Departments	Total FTE**	Federal Funded FTE	SED Cost Per Pupil	SED Cost as % of Educ. Money
Rhode Island	160.45	67.85 35.19%	\$67.64	0.01
Delaware	134.25	50.25 37.43%	\$65.87	0.01
Connecticut	2010.00	200.86 9.99	\$269.73	0.032
Vermont	144.00	66.00 43.83%	\$54.81	0.0076

These figures reveal nothing extraordinary about RIDE. It appears to be neither over-or-understaffed. Its relative costs are in line with other states. Its proportion of employees supported by federal funds is what is generally to be expected. RIDE's number of actual employees does not match its level of authorized positions. This is also true for the other states involved.

The New Role For State Education Departments

The last decade has been a time of substantial discovery regarding the governance, leadership, and management of American education. A major, even if subtle, transition is underway in the roles that state government and state education departments are expected to play.

The role that emerged during the 1960's was that of monitor and regulator. The federal government enacted statutes which funneled resources to states for particular education program improvements. For example, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act had as its principal provision federal funds for the educational assistance of students from low income households. Early experience with these programs suggested that, unless tightly proscribed, states and local school districts would bleed these funds

* Latest year for which comparative data are available.

** These were authorized FTE positions, not all of which were actually filled.

away from their concentrated purpose and distribute them for the benefit of all students. In an effort to remedy this supplanting, federal officials enacted a comprehensive set of regulations specifying in substantial detail the manner and purposes for which such funds were henceforth to be used. A similar set of regulations, even more heavy handed perhaps, accompanied the mid-1970's enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

As a consequence of federal government regulatory requirements, state education departments began to concentrate on monitoring and compliance activities. They deployed the federal staff support they received under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to the hiring of individuals who were knowledgeable about and expected to enforce regulations.

State education department staff came to be seen by local school district officials as compliance directors. This is not to say that state officials were not helpful. However, what they were "helpful" in doing was interpreting and applying federal regulations. Seldom were state officials seen by local educators as helping them solve problems of how to teach mathematics or how to link overly absent Johnny with the community social service assistance he and his family needed to solve attendance problems or health needs.

Monitoring and compliance was the dominant mode at least until the mid-1980's. However, with the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk*, all of American education began to take on a new complexion. Equality did not disappear as an educational goal, but it was eclipsed by excellence and the public demand for higher standards and higher performance expectations. Eventually, state education department roles began to evolve in response to the need for local school districts to elevate student performance.

States such as Kentucky, Vermont, and California began to take dramatic steps toward a collaborative state education department, capable of providing expert assistance to local school districts on matters dealing with the curriculum, instruction, testing, and linking schools to other social services. New collaborative strategies began to be invented involving networks of teachers engaged in subject matter specialties, cooperative ventures which linked schools and school districts to universities and other think tanks, and new performance-oriented assessment procedures began to evolve. Textbook publishers also began to alter their products to meet new and more rigorous expectations.

By the mid-1990's, far more was coming to be understood regarding the leadership and collaborative roles that state education departments could usefully play. The best way to capsulize this change is that state officials are becoming part of a professional team expected to cooperate with local school

district and school professionals in solving instructional and curricula problems.

This is the context in which RIDE now finds itself. For at least three years it has been engaged in making the transition from regulatory agency to professional collaborator. Such a transition calls for substantial shifts in outlook, job specifications, evaluation procedures, hiring specifications, evaluation techniques, and personnel performance incentives. RIDE has made good progress. However, it now faces a set of impediments which, while not financially expensive to overcome, will nevertheless necessitate organizational realignment, greater specificity of planning, more professional development, and sustained political will.

Crucial Capacity Components

Listed below are criteria against which MAP has appraised RIDE. These crucial capacity components are derived from the above-described new vision of the role of state education departments in enhancing opportunity and elevating performance. In order for Rhode Island's education goals to be achieved, and reform strategy to be effective, the following policy and managerial components must be present:

Direction and Strategy. Those in authority must specify and emphasize the right things to do. The Regents and RIDE have taken important steps in this direction. What is needed now is sustained leadership. The message from those in authority must be direct, unequivocal, and persistent that the desired outcomes of expanded opportunity and elevated performance are high priorities and recipients of sustained attention.

Clear Communication. Regents and RIDE must regularly and clearly communicate internally with RIDE professionals and externally, with outside stakeholders, principally local school districts and education professionals, regarding the direction in which Rhode Island is headed and the role of RIDE in the process. Specific implementation plans are crucial in this regard.

Resource Adequacy. RIDE officials and local school districts must not only have sufficient personnel to perform what is expected of them, these individuals must possess appropriate qualifications, and ongoing professional development opportunities must continually be available.

Structural Alignment. RIDE's organizational structure must clearly communicate the Department's purposes and facilitate collaboration with local school districts and other institutions and individuals necessary for enhancing education opportunity and performance.

Technical Infrastructure. RIDE professionals must have access to technology, both training and hardware, to enable them to operate efficiently and communicate effectively.

Climate of Commitment. The culture within RIDE must be clear regarding the organization's mission, self-confident in its outlook, rewarding of risk taking, offer incentives for continuous improvement of professional performance, and collegial in solving problems and assisting stakeholders.

Collaborative Mechanisms. Success in enhancing opportunity and elevating performance will occur only if effective cooperation with local school districts and other agency personnel is accomplished

Self-Renewing Orientation. The Regents and RIDE must have the capacity continually to monitor their own activities and take self-correcting actions when evidence suggests less-than-effective performances.

Analytic Methods

In order to appraise the capacity of the Regents and RIDE to fulfill the six-part education reform strategy, MAP engaged in the multipronged data gathering and analytic effort described below. This study design enabled MAP Associates to gather information from a variety of constituencies both within and outside of the Department of Education. Given the quick pace of the study timeline, it was imperative that MAP employ as many strategies as reasonably possible in order to develop an "organizational snapshot." An accurate portrayal of RIDE's current conditions laid the empirical groundwork for MAP's analysis of organizational capacity.

Analytic methods included the following data collection strategies:

- (1) semi-structured personal interviews,
- (2) internal surveys of RIDE employees,
- (3) external surveys of a variety of RIDE constituency groups,
- (4) analyses of educational, organizational, and financial documents,
- (5) comparative information from other states, and
- (6) information from national networks and resources.

Personal Interviews

MAP Associates conducted personal interviews with approximately 145 individuals over a period of 25 person-days of visitation in Rhode Island. Individuals interviewed included members of local School Committees, state legislators, members of the Department of Education Board of Regents, RIDE classified and non-classified staff members, and local school administrators and staff members. During the course of the interviews, participants were asked to openly share information, opinions, and perceptions. Anonymity of those interviewed was guaranteed. Although MAP personnel conducted the interviews with specific questions in mind, each respondent was encouraged to share information or opinions which seemed appropriate to the study.

Internal Surveys

MAP Associates distributed 150 internal survey forms, providing each RIDE employee with an opportunity to participate. Survey responses were returned by direct mail to MAP's Berkeley, California office. A total of 103 internal surveys was returned, resulting in an overall return rate of nearly 70 percent (68.7%). Rate of return from non-classified staff was 70 percent; rate of return from classified staff was 66 percent. Results were analyzed and compared with data gathered through personal interviews. Survey protocol and response tabulations are provided in an appendix of this report.

External Surveys

A survey designed by MAP Associates was distributed to 1500 individuals, including school superintendents and principals, school committee members, and teacher leaders. As with the internal survey, respondents mailed surveys directly to MAP's Berkeley office. A total of approximately 350 surveys was returned. External survey results were compared with internal survey responses and interview results in an effort to sketch as precisely as possible the perceptions of those who are engaged in and affected by RIDE's operations. No claim is made that these responses suffice as a representative sample of RIDE's clientele.

Document Review

MAP Associates collected and analyzed a variety of internal and external documents which contained important educational, historical, financial, legal, organizational, and evaluative information. Internal documents which were reviewed included RIDE's current organizational structure, policies, strategic plan, finances, legislative mandates, and legal responsibilities.

Documents which contained information about the overall condition of education and student performance in Rhode Island were also examined. These documents and reports included information about the educational performance of Rhode Island students, the governance and organization of Rhode Island school districts, student curriculum and assessment, and educational standards and accountability mechanisms. Previous studies conducted by external evaluators were examined as well.

Comparisons with Other States

In order to provide a broader perspective as well as an additional set of standards against which RIDE could appropriately be analyzed, MAP gathered a discrete set of comparative data from three selected states, Connecticut,

Delaware, and Vermont. A list of comparison documents is appended to this report.

One may reasonably ask, "How were the comparison states determined?" Obviously, Rhode Island has unique geographic, demographic, economic, and educational conditions and it is impossible to find any state in the nation which would be considered a perfect parallel to Rhode Island. Consequently, the comparison states were selected because they echo some critical characteristic which resonates with some of the conditions, experiences, or challenges which also can be found in Rhode Island.

National Perspectives

Another source of information which contributed to MAP's analyses was derived from knowledge about a variety of activities focused on improving educational services which are currently underway at the national level. Information generated from groups such as the National Education Goals Panel, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards were examined in light of the specific conditions which characterize education in Rhode Island. Additionally, MAP personnel considered a variety of academic sources, such as the Center for Policy Research in Education, which provide research-based information about the state role in education reform.

Resulting data were subjected to MAP interpretation, and a set of principal findings was deduced.

Analytic Findings

The above-described data gathering and analytic endeavors lead MAP to conclude that when judged against the crucial components of state leadership and education reform:

- (1) The Board of Regents has adopted and pursued an appropriate improvement strategy for Rhode Island public education.
- (2) RIDE has built momentum in pursuing the Regents' reform strategy.
- (3) A prior (1993) RIDE reorganization, while well intended, distributed the agency's attention over too wide a formal span and diluted a sense of purpose and accountability accordingly.
- (4) RIDE needs far greater specificity in its implementation work plans.

(5) Added steps are necessary to sustain RIDE's momentum in moving from a regulatory and monitoring agency to a fully professional collaborative assistance organization.

(6) RIDE, and Rhode Island education, would benefit from greater and clearer support from Rhode Island's overall policy system. Regents could enhance RIDE's progress by concentrating more upon policy issues and less upon procedural matters.

(7) Rhode Island's interlocking system of personnel assurances via union representation, civil service protection, 20-year position guarantees, and judicial wrongful dismissal decisions contributes to an inflexible and overly bureaucratic system.

(8) There are existing conditions upon which RIDE's reform can continue to capitalize and which provide a basis for optimism regarding the future.

(9) Rhode Island has sustained a reasonable financial commitment to the support of public schools.

(10) Rectifying above-listed deficiencies is not expensive, and if needed changes were made, Rhode Island would reap substantially greater returns on the education investments it has already made.

These ten findings are of differing orders of magnitude. MAP comments upon each. However, far greater attention will be devoted in the following pages to RIDE and Regental deficiencies than to the strengths. This should not be interpreted as a lack of appreciation for the direction that has been established or the progress that RIDE and Regents have made. Rather, this allocation of analytic attention is necessary to provide sufficient rationale for the action recommendations, almost all of which are directed at compensating for deficiencies.

Appropriate Direction

More than most states and in more compelling, logical, and forceful language than is conventionally seen, Rhode Island education officials have made clear their commitment to placing students at the forefront of the schooling agenda. RIDE's strategic plan and an assortment of other public position statements reveal a thoughtful statewide education reform strategy aimed at expanding students' opportunities and elevating their performance.

This reform strategy embodies a coherent mix of six major components: (1) a common set of learning and performance goals for students, (2) a logically

arrayed central curriculum core aligned with goals, (3) an accurate and fair assessment system capable of diagnosing and appraising student and school progress in meeting performance standards, (4) a strong element of local school district discretion in determining means by which goals are pursued, (5) effective links between schools and other social sector agencies capable of enhancing students' ability to elevate their performance, and (6) the availability of substantially expanded professional development opportunities for educators.

As described at the beginning of this report, RIDE's strategy is consistent with the evolving role of state education departments. What has been recognized in the last decade is that the previously relied upon model which emphasized a compliance and monitoring role for states has only been modestly effective. Such a strong regulatory hand has proven to be useful for purposes of achieving a particularly kind of equality. It has been less useful in elevating school district achievement aspirations and school and student performance. The newly conceived role views state education departments as a crucial professional colleague in a collaborative effort which brings subject matter and other skilled expertise to the service of local school and school district personnel. This collaborative and cooperative approach between school districts and the state is hoped to inspire greater academic performance.

This is a strategy which is commonsensical, enjoys substantial currency and support among thoughtful education researchers and policy analysts, and which increasingly is being implemented by other states.

MAP endorses this strategy, and the analyses upon which this consulting report are based are derived from Rhode Island's aspirations for its students and its education reform strategy. MAP poses this question: "What policy system, leadership, and managerial conditions are necessary in order for Rhode Island to meet its expectations for students and maximize the success of its education reform strategy?"

Reform Momentum

The kind of reorientation that RIDE is undergoing is inevitably lengthy. It would take several years in a private sector firm. In a public sector setting with a heavy regulatory and civil service overlay, one would expect a substantial reorganization and reorientation to take even longer. However, even with personnel and infrastructure restrictions, RIDE has made measurable progress toward becoming a collaborative technical assistance agency with a professional outlook.

Internal survey results reveal that RIDE personnel clearly have received the message that the organization's mission has changed. Moreover, recently

employed professional staff appear particular attuned to the organization's new objectives.

Reform accomplishments such as the development of curriculum frameworks, and new academic performance assessment instruments and procedures, will prove crucial in guiding reform throughout Rhode Island's local school districts. Similarly, collaboration of schools with crucial social sector services needed to enable children to learn has been successfully launched.

Inadequate Organizational Alignment and Infrastructure

"Implement a truly flat organization with open meetings and open communication." (Anonymous RIDE staff quote submitted with internal survey response.)

Organizational form should follow organizational purpose. If the principal purpose of the Rhode Island Department of Education is to enhance student opportunity and elevate educational performance, then the formal organization of RIDE should reflect and magnify this mission. The current organization falls short of such expectations.

Diffuse Structure. RIDE's current organizational structure insufficiently underscores the importance of enhancing student opportunity and elevating education performance. It is too complicated and the central mission of providing leadership and collaborating with local districts is confused by a crazyquilt alignment of responsibilities. This condition inhibits the clear conduct of the Department's major functions and muddies accountability.

Director Excess. RIDE does not appear excessively large, at least when compared with similar states such as Connecticut, Delaware, and Vermont. It has neither an unusual number of employees nor does it spend an unusual amount of the state's scarce resources. (See the comparative state education department data previously provided in Figure Two)

However, what can be said of the number of regular employees, both classified and non-classified, cannot be said of the number of Directors. Simply put, there are more RIDE Directors than needed, and responsibilities are unevenly distributed among them. There are eleven such positions. Some of these officials oversee very few subordinates. The costs and other messages conveyed by such an unbalanced structure do not appear to justify the end of greater managerial flexibility. The same goal can be achieved through other avenues.

A word of caution is in order here. Reducing the number of Directors should occur, in a manner consistent with Rhode Island personnel procedures.

However, a reader should not expect immediate large cost savings as a result. For example, the union collective bargaining agreement currently operating within RIDE enables Specialist IV position occupants, under some scenarios, to earn higher salaries than Directors.

Inadequate Infrastructure. The combination of gruesomely outmoded physical facilities and past failures to invest in modern technology badly erodes the effectiveness of RIDE staff, both classified and non-classified.

The current RIDE facility at 22 Hayes Street, despite its historic significance and future restoration potential, speaks louder than any text or picture regarding the ambivalence of Rhode Island's policy system toward education. Aside from the symbolic message that "Education Does Not Count," the building actively discourages efficient operation. The absence of modern facilities, modern computing equipment, sufficient space for professional activity, and modern heating, ventilating, and air conditioning handicaps the day-to-day work of classified and non-classified employees alike. A particularly disconcerting facet of this condition is the extent to which RIDE employees have accommodated to the situation.

Ineffective Communication. This is a topic touched upon again in several following sections. However, it is an item which has been brought to MAP's attention with such frequency and forcefulness that it can hardly be overemphasized. It is broached again in this section because the formal organizational structure appears to contribute to the difficulty of communicating clearly with RIDE staff. RIDE is a relatively small government agency. Approximately 100 professional staff members do not present much of a communication challenge. Nevertheless, current organizational structures impede the clear flow of ideas in both directions, from the Commissioner's office to the periphery and reciprocally.

Pragmatic Operation and Effective Planning

"Establish workplans prior to July 1 of each year and then work to those plans without being torn in ten directions" (Anonymous quotation submitted by RIDE staff with internal survey response.)

The Department has performed well in providing the Regents with a vision of effective school reform in Rhode Island and in communicating that strategy to the larger community and to RIDE staff. What is lacking, and what must be provided in order for effective reform to proceed, is the development of a far more detailed tactical workplan which can guide RIDE staff in the conduct of their day-to-day professional activities, personnel job descriptions consistent with this workplan, professional retraining and recruiting strategies, and consistent communication regarding the seriousness of these plans.

Inadequate Direction and Mixed Signals. Only six percent of RIDE professional staff respondents and even fewer, three percent, of classified staff strongly agree with the internal survey statement, "Information is regularly shared with all staff members." More than 50 percent of classified and non-classified respond that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. The communication problem was a frequently mentioned dimension in MAP interviews with RIDE staff. It is a byproduct, in part, of the bifurcated, new and old, organization outlooks to which lengthy reference is made in the following section.

But the absence of communication is not the only apparent problem. MAP interviews frequently uncovered staff frustration over confused or conflicting signals from top level management.

Outmoded Internal Control Procedures. Too much attention is paid to administrative matters which can be streamlined substantially. For example, it is no longer necessary to oversee local school district spending to the degree now undertaken by the Department. Review of local school district categorically funded programs need not be undertaken both by RIDE program officers and financial officers.

Outmoded External Control Procedures. The Department should have far greater fiscal autonomy, once its budget has been approved by legislative and executive branch officials. Expecting the Department to undertake necessary paperwork on contracts and purchases, and then have the entire process repeated by the Department of Administration, is wasteful of the public's scarce resources. For example, the Department of Administration need not exercise line item budget control over RIDE. External manipulation of line item figures can unfairly supersede RIDE priorities and render RIDE operations inefficient. The state already has control over the overall amount of the budget. The state can have control over budget compliance by conducting, or contracting for the outside conduct of an annual end-of-year audit.

Organizational Self Doubt

"Do more than conduct an evaluation. This study will be helpful if it becomes the starting point for ongoing process consultation." (Anonymous quotation submitted by professional staff member with internal survey response.)

RIDE professionals labor under a debilitating bifurcated view. MAP takes this to be evidence of an incomplete transition to a new kind of modern

professional organizational capable of conducting the mission RIDE has adopted for itself.

Many RIDE professionals have accepted the Department's new mission and genuinely believe that their principal role is to assist local school districts and schools. However, many RIDE professional staff do not believe that their organization possesses sufficient competence or credibility to fulfill this mission. Equally unsettling, many external to the organization, individuals with whom RIDE must regularly interact, hold a similarly critical view of the organization.

Commissioner McWalters' principal objective for RIDE when he assumed office was to transform the organization's mission from rule enforcement to leadership for educational reform. The change in organizational principal purpose meant that the chief tasks of RIDE shifted from regulation and compliance monitoring of districts to collaborative support and assistance. While the transformation often has been well received by districts, it has created significant tensions both internally and externally.

The tension is perhaps best described, as previously suggested, as that between two competing organizational outlooks. One outlook, which has its roots principally in federal and state-imposed statutes and regulations, views the role of the Department as enforcing, applying, adhering to, and monitoring the adoption and implementation of various sets of rules and regulations.

The other outlook—the one around which the current Commissioner is endeavoring to re-shape RIDE—conceives of an organization as a continuous learning environment. This type of organization is collaborative. It adopts and implements principles of collaboration and collegiality *internally* as an operating norm among those who work in the organization. It applies this same spirit of collaboration *externally*, in interactions with individuals outside the organization. This type of organization is also entrepreneurial, ever in search of new resources, new means by which to enhance personnel's professional skills, and new mechanisms for increasing organizational capacity.

Individuals who work in the continuous learning environment type of organization are able effectively to blend (generally through a "teaming approach") critical organizational change elements of content and process. They understand the fundamentals of how students learn, how schools are organized for teaching and learning, and how districts support (or need to support) schools in their efforts. They are also content experts. Some critical mass of these professionals know math, science, English, or history.

These two outlooks—one which is rule-driven and the other which adopts a more organic, ongoing developmental perspective—are near opposites. Orienting an organization toward one of these points of view necessarily subordinates the other outlook to a vastly reduced functional role.

The organizational transformation which Commissioner McWalters is attempting to achieve in RIDE has sometimes been a difficult one. The change in the Department requires professionals to redefine their work roles. Previously, their jobs were somewhat narrowly defined, bounded by a set of tasks anchored in specific routines—did districts comply with federal and state regulations, did they meet base curriculum requirements? Under the current administration, not only do RIDE employees have to learn a new set of professional behaviors, but they must also think differently.

To be successful, RIDE must not only redefine work roles and responsibilities, but also a whole new set of professional competencies is now important, competencies which many in the organization believe they lack. For those individuals locked within the monitor and compliance mode of operation, the response to change sometimes has been to disengage, hunker down, and hope that they can outlast the new commissioner.

Additionally, RIDE's professionals do not fully believe they have the resources—access, time, technology—to do an adequate job. Some feel frustrated because there are too many demands on them and, as a result, they believe they are unable to perform effectively. Moreover, they are unclear about their work priorities, whether internal departmental concerns ought to be given greater attention and weight than external school assistance issues.

Individuals assert that much of their time is spent in unproductive meetings that often fail to reach closure on issues, and that these kinds of internal activities curtail their capacity to cooperate with school districts. The concerns of RIDE professionals are mirrored in some of the comments of individuals MAP interviewed in districts. Access to RIDE individuals who are regarded as highly competent and helpful is difficult because they are in great demand and because there are few of them.

The conflict between the two organizational outlooks is anchored in the fact that the Commissioner's vision for the Department as an agent of school reform has been only partially operationalized. In an effort to render the Department more dynamic and collaborative, the Commissioner eliminated the old hierarchy and replaced it with a flatter, decentralized matrix structure.

While the resulting formal structure may appear different, vestiges of hierarchy are manifested through the persistence of a "way we've always done things around here" mentality. Information appears to bottleneck at the directors' and deputy level. Communications from top to bottom are impeded

in both directions. Access to decision making is difficult. While the formal, organizational features of hierarchical decision making have been replaced, they remain firmly fixed in the informal decision making structure of the Department.

The tension between the two organizational outlooks is also manifested in the Department's capacity to provide collaborative assistance to districts. The common perception among district superintendents and principals whom MAP interviewed is that there are highly capable individuals within the Department on whom local districts and schools can call for assistance. However, these RIDE staff are overly much in demand, and consequently difficult to reach.

Internal survey results reinforce interviews and findings from an examination of RIDE procedural and organizational dynamics. For example, RIDE staff are able publicly to express what is expected of the organization. They report overwhelmingly (90 percent of professional and 76 percent of classified respondents) that the principal mission of RIDE is developing and promoting a statewide set of learning goals and providing assistance to local school districts. Conversely, only 17 percent of responding professional staff hold the view that their principal mission is to enforce state and federal regulations. These, and related responses, suggest that RIDE employees have heard the Commissioner's message.

However, when it comes to a belief that RIDE can fulfill the new mission, as enunciated by the Commissioner, matters change dramatically. Only three percent of professional respondents, and no classified respondents, hold strongly to the view that RIDE is able effectively to promote school improvement. When asked their overall judgment regarding the effectiveness of RIDE, only 1 percent of professional staff would accord their own organization a grade of "A." No classified staff believe they work in an "A" rated organization. Conversely, 36 percent of professional and 22 percent of classified respondents accord their organization a failing grade, a "D" or "F."

RIDE respondents' organizational self-doubt extends to their view of what others think of the institution. For example, 84 percent of professional respondents assert that local schools view RIDE either as disconnected from schools or as a regulatory impediment. Two-thirds (66%) of classified colleagues hold the same views.

Given these dismal organizational self-concepts, it is little wonder that large proportions of RIDE employee respondents, if they could live their work life over, assert that they would choose to be employed elsewhere. More than 40

percent of professional employees would, if they could, seek other employment if they were to begin their career anew.

These perceptions, and organization self-perceptions, assuredly impede RIDE's ability to fulfill its mission.

Insufficient Job Specifications. Here is a place where RIDE's resources have simply not kept pace with the need to change. Many of the professional job descriptions need to be altered to reflect the organization's new mission to emphasize the need to collaborate with local schools and districts. There appears not to have been sufficient time to make this change. The Human Resources branch of RIDE has numerous responsibilities and few personnel. However, in order to enable the institution to respond to its new mission, to establish which entities can and which cannot meet new expectations, the expectations need to be developed.

Policy System Ambivalence

"The policy agenda is dominated by special interest politics, and not by the needs of students, schools, and teachers." (Anonymous quotation submitted by external survey respondent.)

Rhode Island's policy system participants, governors, legislators, and Regents have made a financial commitment to public education. However, they have not previously followed through on the relatively easier steps necessary to ensure the state receives the maximum return on these financial investments.

For example, the Board of Regents is important. This deliberative body can set education direction, within the boundaries permitted by the Legislature and Governor, and serve as an important sounding board amplifying the significance of schooling excellence throughout the state. Thus, the Regents as a body deserve the full attention and respect of the Governor.

Past gubernatorial practices of neglecting to fill Regent openings in a timely manner, appointing some individuals without regard to their public stature or qualifications, failing to maximize the importance of statewide (as opposed to narrow special or regional interests), and otherwise denying the institution the dignity it deserves and needs practically to be effective wastes important and scarce opportunities to provide leadership.

The Legislature has not always sent a clear message either. While willingness to appropriate money for schools is important, by itself, it is insufficient. Too few legislators take education to be an important state obligation. It is impossible to enhance constituents' knowledge of important issues without being informed oneself. To be sure there are selected committee chairs and a

few isolated champions of education in the Legislature. However, Rhode Island's public weal would benefit if larger numbers of legislators would assume education as their cause, inform themselves appropriately, and serve both as advocates and constructive critics.

Cumbersome Personnel Procedures

It is difficult to reorient RIDE to its new mission because of complicated personnel regulations. In addition to conventional civil service protection, and the wrongful dismissal provisions reinforced by case law, RIDE professional employees, at least below the level of Director, are represented by a union which negotiates additional contractually-reinforced job specifications and protections. Lastly, Rhode Island has a "20-year rule" guaranteeing an individual of such tenure a lifetime civil service position of at least equal rank. Whereas one can understand the desirability of ensuring employees of all kinds are treated fairly, Rhode Island's various statutory provisions appear to err on the side of organizational rigidity.

Regents can amplify the effectiveness of their office by concentrating on an agenda emphasizing education expectations, making clear that the interests of students are paramount, overseeing outcomes rather than processes, and adopting procedures for appraising their own effectiveness.

Currently, Regent meetings are held in physical settings which deprive the office of dignity. Meetings are too often centered upon procedural matters some of which could be more productively assigned to a consent calendar. Committee structures are insufficiently relied upon. Two Regent meetings a month is highly likely to bleed resources from an administrative staff which is already thin. The absence of measures by which the body can appraise its own process undermines accountability and will contribute to frustration on the part of individual Regents for whom there are many competing activities for their time.

Conditions Upon Which To Capitalize

"There are many informed and insightful staff within the Department." (Anonymous quotation submitted by external survey respondent.)

However fundamental the above-listed problems of RIDE and the Regents may appear, there actually is good reason for being optimistic regarding the continued reform of education in Rhode Island. Specifically, the following positive dimensions are significant and should be taken into account in any overall appraisal.

New policy system arrangements. Election of a new governor to a four-year term should lengthen the time horizon for leadership. A sustained term of office should contribute to policy stability and provide the recently elected governor with an unusual opportunity to shape the composition of the Board of Regents.

Highly Regarded Commissioner. Appointment three years ago of a highly regarded and nationally visible Commissioner, known for both his vision and his vitality, provides an opportunity not always present in a state for education leadership. Moreover, Regents and other officials show every indication of confidence in the Commissioner's leadership and vision for Rhode Island education reform.

Appropriate Reform Strategy. The Regents and Commissioner have repeatedly announced and reinforced an education reform strategy, referred to as the "Six Point Plan" outlined in the "Analytic Perspective" section of this report. This plan is widely considered appropriate and logically valid, and is embraced by Department employees.

Sufficient Resources. Seldom do resources seem sufficient to those engaged immediately in an endeavor, and educators, like virtually all professionals, almost always desire more for their clients. However, when measured relative to other states, Rhode Island has made a substantial resource commitment to education.

Manageable Scale. A state of a million inhabitants, ranging 48 by 37 miles, serving fewer than 150,000 students in 36 school districts presents a scale which seems manageable. For education purposes, there are many counties in the United States larger geographically and demographically than Rhode Island. This is not for a moment intended to minimize the significance of the challenge for RIDE and the Regents. However, it does reinforce perspective and underscore the fact that additional change is possible.

Professional Good Will. RIDE employees exhibit an unusually intense loyalty and commitment to their institution. To be sure, they are constructively critical. They are aware of their own and the organization's shortcomings. Nevertheless, their spirit constitutes a substantial source of reform energy and goodwill capital.

Resource Adequacy

The only long-run solution to Rhode Island's relatively weak current competitive position on economic and labor force dimensions is through

investments in human capital and physical infrastructure¹. Thus, financial investment directed at elementary and secondary education is precisely the prescription necessary for the state to reclaim its proud history as a leader in economic endeavors and for ensuring a secure and satisfying future for its citizens.

Fortunately, Rhode Island is making the commitment. The state is located in the nation's highest education spending geographic corridor. New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut regularly outspend the national average by wide margins. Nevertheless, on significant measures, Rhode Island remains competitive. For example, Rhode Island ranks 10th in the nation regarding per pupil revenues for K - 12 school support. It spends 18 percent more per pupil (\$25,000 more per median size classroom) than the national average. It is within one-half of one percent (\$38) of Massachusetts' per pupil spending. In fact, when an adjustment is made for differences in cost of living, Rhode Island actually spends more per pupil than Massachusetts.

Rhode Island ranks as the 5th most favorable state in terms of teacher/pupil ratios. Its teachers are 12th in the nation in average annual salary. Overall spending on K - 12 schools has expanded 10 percent in the last two years. The state's level of tax effort regularly exceeds the national average. It ranks 13th in the nation in terms of state and local tax revenues as a percent of personal per capita income. School financial support comprises half of what Rhode Island as a state and its various townships spend on public sector endeavors.

However, while spending money is necessary, by itself, it is insufficient. Returns to investment do not automatically accrue. Capital must be guided. Assets must be allocated wisely. Investments must be directed and overseen. Rhode Island has made the investment, but is failing to take the necessary few steps to ensure a high return.

Completing the investment strategy, providing necessary guidance and oversight, need not be an exceedingly costly. At least, the added costs need not be financial. This is a topic addressed in added detail later in the report.

Maximizing Investment Returns

"Build a policy and planning support team that is aligned with the Regents' agenda. Move to operationalize the vision in a consistent, concrete, comprehensive, and realistic manner. The results will be remarkable." (Anonymous quote submitted with external survey response.)

¹ MAP wishes to express appreciation to the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Commission for information on and a briefing regarding the competitive status of Rhode Island's economy.

Currently, Rhode Island devotes less than one half of one percent (.5%) of total state spending and approximately one percent (1%) of all public funds spent on education to the operation of RIDE. This is a relatively small amount of money. However, not much more is needed to ensure a substantial return on what has already been spent. Added investment in matters such as converting academic performance assessments to modern means, ensuring that RIDE professional staff have adequate development activities, that modern communication and computing are brought to RIDE, and that plans for moving to a new building continue to stay on track are important items for ensuring that the investment pays off.

The action recommendations which follow suggest means by which the policy system can gain far greater returns to their existing education investments. Here it is critical to emphasize that whereas on this dimension the financial costs of improvement are few, added political and intellectual capital will be necessary in order to take maximum advantage of this potential leverage. Given the significance of education for the state's long-run well being and the existing magnitude of the state's financial investment, Rhode Island's policy system displays a remarkable degree of ambivalence over important structural and procedural matters regarding education governance. Boldly stated, Rhode Island must make a greater *political system commitment* to education.

Guiding Criteria

Recommendations described in the following section have been framed and tested by a set of guiding criteria. Specifically, all recommendations been passed through a screen with the following test components:

Enhancing Mission. Recommendations are consistent with RIDE's and Regents' purpose of enhancing educational opportunity and elevating student performance.

Reducing Complexity. Every effort has been made to ensure that a recommendation, if implemented, would reduce overall system complexity. This means more access to decision makers, more discretion accorded professionals, more resources immediately at hand for performing one's job, and a better, more efficient working environment.

Spending Neutrality. Recommendations should not lead to added operating costs in excess of what has already been contemplated for RIDE². In fact, eventually, there could be cost savings. However, it is recommended that if

² Continued investment in new statewide student testing systems, curriculum framework development, RIDE staff professional development, and technology infrastructure is a virtual must for RIDE to become increasingly effective.

there are downstream savings from reducing administrative complexity these be returned to RIDE for reinvestment in professional development and acquisition of modern technology.

Recommended Actions

The following recommendations are constructed upon two major assumptions. They assume that the education reform strategy adopted and promoted by the Regents and Commissioner is appropriate. This strategy is consistent with what is known empirically regarding education change and conforms with the actions of other education reform minded states.

The second basic assumption is that the analytic findings described in prior sections of this report accurately encompass the principal impediments to successful pursuit of Rhode Island's education reform strategy. The findings assert that there are four principal deficiencies: (1) an organizational structure which fails properly to emphasize and reinforce the Department's reform mission (2) RIDE's incomplete progress in making a transition to a full professional and collaborative culture, (3) a series of practical planning and managerial problems and (4) policy system ambivalence. MAP recommendations and suggested action strategies are concentrated in these areas.

Organizational Realignments

RIDE reorganized only two years ago. Those changes contained many good ideas. The principal problem is that they diffused the purposes of the organization. They did not sufficiently convey the centrality of collaborative assistance to schools and districts. Hence, the structure recommended below attempts to provide added focus.

However, an agency can suffer from too much change. Given this caveat, the formal reorganization recommendations that follow are intended more to realign components of RIDE than to shuffle personnel from one chart-prescribed box to another. Proposed changes realign formal relations in order to emphasize principal functions of RIDE. However, they are not intended to alter existing relationships within and among productive groups of professional employees.

The proposed realignments have the following major purposes. They are intended to clarify and emphasize RIDE's new functions, engage in cooperative leadership with local school districts to enhance students' opportunity, and elevate performance. Additionally, the recommended organizational restructuring should promote personnel accountability, enhance communication and facilitate the exchange of ideas across and

among important organizational components of RIDE. Third, suggested changes deploy RIDE's scarce human resources more *efficiently*.

The suggested realignments are as follows:

Structural Streamlining

The recommended new structure consists of three principal components: (1) an Executive Office of the Commissioner, (2) a Division of Administration, and (3) a Division of Teaching and Learning. Each of these three components represents a major organizational function.

Office of the Commissioner. The Office of the Commissioner has two principal responsibilities. The first is continually to determine, with the Regents, the "right" things for RIDE to do. This is a strategic planning and forward looking function. In addition, the Office of the Commissioner is the principal point of interaction between RIDE and the external environments of state and federal government. These are both intended as staff activities. The Office of the Commissioner should not be viewed as an operating unit with line responsibility for education management or reform activities.

Principal activities include (1) intergovernmental relations (2) public information, (3) resource development, (4) policy support, and (5) transition coordination. Also, this office would continue to have two Special Assistants assigned to the Commissioner to act as an internal Department liaison and to coordinate a multitude of day-to-day activities.

Administrative Services Division. The principal function of this division would be to oversee operational activities mandated by law. The Division would be headed by an Associate Commissioner. There would be two principal subdivisions, each headed by a Director.

The Fiscal Operations Branch would encompass functions such as Budget/Controller, State Aid, Grants Management, Business Services, and Food Services.

A Support Services Branch would encompass functions such as Teacher Licensing, Human Resources, Civil Rights, Management Information Systems and Technology Support, Adjudication and Appeals, and Reprographics. It is also in this Division that the Department's management of operating units such as technical schools, GED programs, Adult Education, and Central Falls oversight should be located.³

³ Central Falls represents a challenge to RIDE, the Regents, and Rhode Island state government generally. The decision that eventually will have to be reached is whether (1) to resuscitate Central Falls and place it, once again, on its own two feet as a free standing school

In time, selected activities located in this Division might be integrated into the Teaching and Learning Division, described below. For example, when teacher licensure is reformed to provide for more dynamic processes and is less concerned with ensuring numbers of approved courses taken by a candidate, it might well fit better in the larger teaching and learning division.

Teaching & Learning Division. This would be the largest unit within RIDE. It would be headed by an Associate Commissioner who, in the absence of the Commissioner, would speak for the Department. (The occupant of this position should be recruited from outside the ranks of the Department.)⁴ It would have as many professional personnel as possibly could be assigned to it. Its principal function would be to engage collaboratively with local school districts in the improvement of classroom instruction. Eventually, it would have two major branches, one devoted to Curriculum and Assessment and the other encompassing all special programs. Each branch would be headed by a Director. During a transition period it may be necessary to have more than two directors.

Instruction, Curriculum & Assessment would encompass assessment development and expertise in mathematics, science, literacy, social studies, and early childhood. ***The principal focus of this branch is to elevate pupil performance throughout Rhode Island's schools.***

The Programs & Services Branch would encompass integrated social services, special education and gifted programs, career and vocational education, and other federal categorical programs. ***The principal focus of this branch is to expand educational opportunity for Rhode Island students.***

Interdivisional Cooperation

Each of these two major operating divisions should have a focused responsibility. Administrative Services concentrates on ensuring that school

district or (2) to continue an oversight, and possible operating, function. The latter strategy presumes that Central Falls could become something of a showcase in Rhode Island for innovative and successful practices. In effect, RIDE would attempt to utilize Central Falls as a Research and Development school district illustrating best practices for the remainder of Rhode Island. Whichever of these strategies is adhered to, attention should also be given to developing plans for the prospect of other local school districts which face serious financial difficulties. What posture will RIDE adopt when another district becomes insolvent? It would be better to anticipate such problems and have contingency plans than to have to react, ad hoc, problem by problem. Arrangements should be made eventually to transfer Adult Education, GED activities, and Driver Education to the community college system or to the Board of Governors.

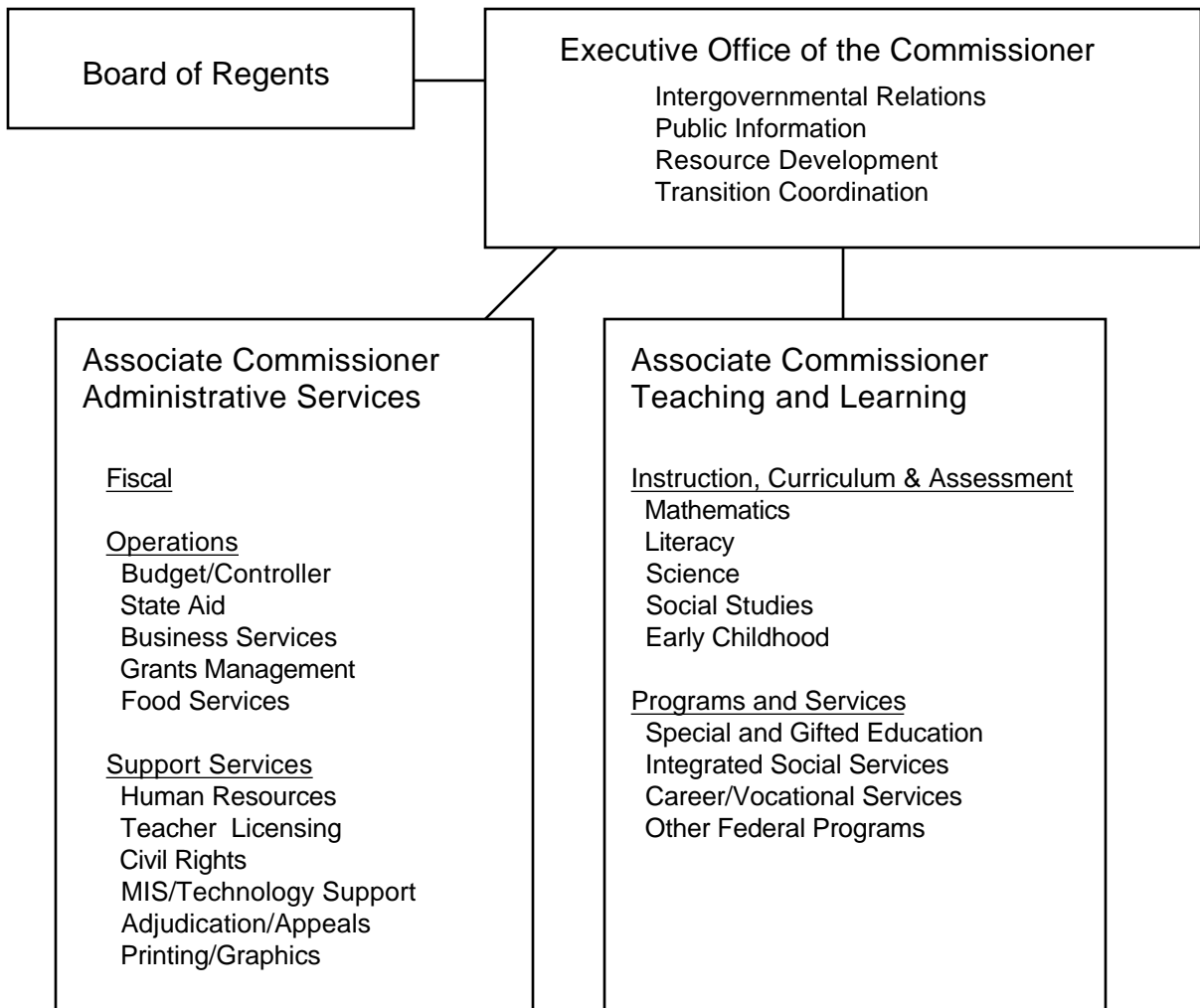
⁴ MAP recommends outside recruitment, not because there are no able people within RIDE. Rather, it would be to RIDE's advantage to have an added number of individuals with fresh perspective included in the professional mix within the Department.

districts and schools receive resources they need and deserve. Teaching and Learning concentrates upon enhancing opportunity and elevating performance. However, as focused as each new Division needs to be, one should not overlook the need for the two to cooperate. Each is an integral component of successful RIDE operation. Indeed, from time to time, Task Teams which visit and cooperate with local school and district personnel will be comprised of RIDE professionals from each Division.

Integrating Library Services

In the process of undertaking analyses for this report, Rhode Island state government announced that Library Services were to be integrated with the state education department. MAP has not had the time, nor resources, fully to explore the implications of such a consolidation. However, from the outset, at least two questions emerge: “Is the Library Division to be a free-standing component of the state education department, enjoying substantial autonomy, simply being housed in a different formal organization arrangement? Or, are library services, eventually, to be fully integrated into the mission of the Department and coordinated as a dynamic component of enhancing opportunity in Rhode Island and elevating education performance?”

MAP contends that, after thoughtful planning, library services should become an integral component in the newly recommended Division of Teaching and Learning. Such an arrangement would offer Rhode Island an opportunity unique among states to integrate modern information methods into the school setting and, additionally, to transform school libraries into community resources for students and adult learners as well.



Completing a Transition to a Fully Professional Organization

A central tenet that should be kept in mind is that implementing RIDE plans should include strategies for maximizing support, or “buy-in,” of the Department’s own staff, who must necessarily be involved in developing details and implementation procedures.

Additionally, RIDE should continually scan the education environment for means by which to involve local Rhode Island educators in developing and implementing reform plans and activities. RIDE personnel need especially to consider ways in which they can demonstrate their understanding of the dilemmas and challenges statewide education reform plans pose for local school districts, and means by which appropriately to “mesh” state reform plans with locally generated education change activities.

RIDE has at least ten levers at its disposal for shaping the organization's culture, for reinforcing the new vision of the organization's mission, and overcoming the ambivalence regarding purpose and prospect that was displayed in MAP interviews and internal survey results.

Clarity of Mission. This topic has been mentioned several times already. The repetition reinforces that few activities and conditions are as important for an organization as knowing what it is expected to accomplish. It is difficult to socialize new employees to their tasks and retrain experienced employees unless an organization knows confidently what it is expected to accomplish overall. Consequently, the sooner RIDE begins to crystallize a set of action plans for each of its major operating components, the more quickly it will be able to overcome the organizational ambivalence among its professional staff.

Recruitment and Selection. In those instances where RIDE begins to recruit new employees, it has an opportunity for contributing to and reinforcing its mission. Employees' qualifications and experience should be consistent with the mission of assisting schools and school districts. RIDE can benefit from having a larger number of professional staff who have had experience with schools. It can also benefit from having a larger number of individuals who are subject matter specialists. These and other specialized qualifications can enhance the Department's ability to collaborate with local school district educators.

Position Performance Descriptions. A portion of the detailed action plan for RIDE will need to be a review and revision of job descriptions to ensure that they accurately reflect the new mission of assisting schools toward reform. To mention the obvious, such position descriptions establish expectations for employees' work. Hence, ensuring that the expectations are consistent with the overall mission is important.

Professional Development. Ensuring that experienced as well as newly employed professional staff continually have access to training and retraining opportunities will become an increasingly important component of RIDE's operation. Such retraining will be necessary to complete the transition to an organizational culture of collaborative assistance with schools and districts. It will also be necessary as technology changes and RIDE employees need to be retrained to take advantage of it.

Collective Bargaining Agreements. At a minimum RIDE management should not enter into collectively bargained agreements on dimensions which, however unintentionally on the part of labor, impede implementation of RIDE's collaborative mission. More positively, collective bargaining agreements should contain cooperatively agreed to provisions enabling personnel to understand and further RIDE purposes.

Task Teams. RIDE should rely heavily upon professional collaborative teams in cooperating with local school personnel. Such teams comprised of various specialists could reinforce the culture of professional collaboration. Team leaders should be selected for their understanding, among other dimensions, of RIDE purposes. This will enable team leaders to model and reinforce desired behavior and outlook.

Continuing External Appraisal and Feedback. RIDE employees, and teams of employees, should continually be seeking appraisal and feedback from their clients, school and social service personnel, regarding their helpfulness and assistance. This feedback will reinforce for RIDE personnel what they should be doing, as well as how well they are doing it.

Formal Evaluation. The formal personnel evaluation procedures RIDE implements to measure and appraise employee performance should have as a component the extent to which staff members understand the Department's mission and are contributing to it.

Symbolic and Material Rewards. When RIDE staff perform well and in a manner consistent with the new mission, their efforts should be recognized, at least symbolically, and, if at all possible, materially. Calling attention publicly to employees who perform well, ensuring that they personally are told when their efforts are appreciated, and conveying news of their successes to wider audiences will reinforce performance consistent with new expectations. Also, internal promotions offer another important opportunity to reinforce performance consistent with the organization's purposes.

Modeling. The Commissioner and all Department leaders should themselves be unusually conscious of the extent to which their words and actions are capable of reinforcing, when done well, or eroding, when performed poorly, other employees' image of the Department and their own personal role in RIDE. "Managing by walking around" can be overdone. However, it can be underdone, too. Informal conversations with RIDE employees, (after all, RIDE is a small organization) can offer an unusual opportunity to reinforce organizational mission and purpose. Such informal and formal modeling also displays to employees that professional collegial behavior is valued at all levels of the organization.

Solving Practical and Planning Problems

RIDE's school improvement mission encompasses three programmatic areas: curriculum frameworks, performance standards and outcomes, and assessment. Assisting schools in the development and implementation of these program areas comprises the principal objective of the Department. The organizational units that are responsible for implementing the Department's

mission must have clearly articulated goals and objectives—a workplan—to focus both short- and long-term activities. Moreover, the front-line organizational units—those that help convert the Department’s mission into teaching and learning activities at the school level—form the critical nexus between the Department and schools. Consequently, the professional competence and expertise of the individuals in those units should be a primary concern of the Commissioner.

Based upon MAP interviews and survey responses of both RIDE and school district personnel, the controlling principle of the Department, as it defines its workplan, might be that less is more. Like Theodore Sizer’s Coalition of Essential Schools that encourages schools to focus on selected, reasonably achievable goals, the Department should define a work plan that focuses on the essential components of its school improvement efforts. Therefore, RIDE should connect its workplan to a time-line that spans a multi-year planning horizon. A six-year planning horizon, for instance, might focus on implementation of curriculum frameworks in year one, assessment in years two and three, outcome standards year four, and program quality reviews in years five and six. The purpose here is not to be prescriptive, but illustrative. Given the resource constraints of the Department, it needs to concentrate its energies on specific tasks.

General criticism of RIDE, both internal and external, is anchored in its apparent difficulty in forging an operational definition of how its objectives can be linked to schools. From the schools’ perspective, RIDE has as an important resource a number of knowledgeable professionals who are well regarded by school and district personnel. However, expertise within the Department is considered to be uneven. RIDE is also described as being distant and remote—hard to reach and not knowledgeable of the daily life in schools. An often used phrase in connection with the Department is “out of touch.”

Because of the relatively small number of individuals in the Department who have the expertise and confidence of the field to assist schools, timeliness of technical support becomes particularly acute. The issue is made problematic, of course, by the fact that demand exceeds supply. The Department has—even under the best of circumstances—only a handful of professionals to assist schools in 36 districts.

How, then, should RIDE relate to the field in a manner that maximizes its current strengths while minimizing constraints? First, RIDE should seek to maximize those organizational attributes and characteristics that are most valued by the field.

These are:

expertise: knowledge of thoughtful, best practices,

timeliness: providing ongoing, consistent, predictable technical assistance and support, and

inclusiveness: engaging a large number of individuals—teachers, principals, superintendents—in school improvement activities.

The means for connecting RIDE’s principal objectives—curriculum, assessment, and standards—to schools comprise three types of activities. They are (1) professional development, (2) collaborative assistance, and (3) organizational assessment. These three elements should not be regarded as independent areas of activity, but as an integrated quartet, each element of which is essential to realizing RIDE’s mission.

Professional development aims to build a professional culture both in schools and within RIDE. The key to professional development is to support and nurture a strong professional culture in schools. Writ large, professional development both initiates and sustains “the conversation” about school improvement. It is an important force in socializing teachers and administrators in that it shapes how individuals define their professional lives. RIDE can play an important role in this regard in several ways.

Academic-professional exchange programs. The Department should have the ability to exchange individuals with school districts. Such exchanges might be of one semester or one year duration. In this way, the Department can make available the best talent in districts and schools to all districts in the state. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to develop their professional expertise and to receive recognition for excellent teaching. (RIDE might consider a career ladder program for teachers or a “Master Teacher” designation that would provide the pool for this kind of exchange and would expand the reach of teachers’ expertise beyond the school.)

Brokering professional expertise. The Department can act as facilitator between schools and educational experts. For example, a school might have a particular need for expertise in reading, literacy, or portfolio training. The need might only extend to a workshop, a discussion, or a review of research in some particular area. However, RIDE can play an important role in connecting individuals from universities and colleges, professional organizations, and the like with schools.

Workshops. Ongoing, rather than one-time, workshops related to curriculum, assessment and standards can play an important role in shaping local implementation of RIDE’s improvement objectives. Workshops may target principals, teachers, or district administrators, or they may target subject matter interests.

Summer institutes. Such institutes can target areas of special needs that are not easily covered in workshops or discussions. The special summer institutes for math and science teachers at the Lawrence Hall of Science at University of California at Berkeley exemplify the possibilities in this area of activity.

Special projects. There should be a source of funds to allow RIDE professionals, in collaboration with regional organizations, post-secondary institutions, hospitals, social service organizations, schools, etc. to develop new and innovative programs that *further RIDE's principal objectives.*

Collaborative assistance and support. This area of activity provides support for implementation of curriculum frameworks, assessment, and outcome standards. Activities in this area differ from professional development in that they focus more on substance rather than teaching and learning. This area of activity concentrates on assisting districts to develop:

- curriculum standards
- multiple assessment instruments
- curriculum guides and frameworks
- instructional materials
- dissemination strategies
- textbook review and selection criteria

Given RIDE's resource constraints, existing staff cannot adequately perform these functions. Consequently, RIDE must look to engaging in cooperative ventures through regional collaboratives or networks. The Department can leverage its expertise through various cooperative strategies that maximize contact with the field and simultaneously create a network of professionals who can further leverage expertise.

Organizational assessment. This forms the third corner of RIDE activities that link its program objectives to schools and, more importantly, to student achievement. A critical question in this regard—one that might organize evaluation criteria—is to what extent RIDE's improvement objectives have prompted schools to alter the content and organization of curriculum, instruction, and testing. How do schools use resources? The focus of program evaluation and assessment should be on schools as organizations. The focus should not be on how well schools implement

specific programs, but how well schools integrate a broad range of activities in ways which enhance their competence.

The principal virtue of organizational assessment is that it creates a structural link between policy and practice. It does so by making schools self-conscious about matters of organizational design and purpose. The critical element in all evaluation models is the questions they raise about (a) what constitutes good information, (b) how information can best be collected, (c) how information can be used to inform school decision making, and (d) the status of the relationship between schools and funding agencies. Several models (not necessarily mutually exclusive) address this need.

The accreditation model integrates accountability, organizational capacity building, and school improvement. It is also consistent with the concept of “mediating” policy (i.e. shaping organizational cultures that promote the state’s educational mission). The accreditation model can be structured in a variety of ways. It can be organized around collaboratives, regions, or some other grouping of districts—by socioeconomic status, for instance. Assessment teams could consist of state, district, school, university, college, and regional laboratory personnel. The virtue of such an arrangement goes beyond assessment. Its purpose is to create a network of professionals that shares ideas and strategies. The evaluation information could be used by the school as well as RIDE. The information should be regarded as critical to school improvement, not simply as monitoring and compliance activity.

The Inspectorate model might look to the creation of a professional cadre of evaluators similar to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) of schools in England. Under the system, begun in 1839, the chief inspector produces an annual report summarizing and commenting on inspections carried out over the academic year. The report may focus from year to year on different dimensions of schools. For instance, the report may concentrate on math and science education one year and language arts the following year. Highly qualified individuals would evaluate schools for accountability as well as provide important information to them about program quality and effectiveness. It is important to note that inspectors are not monitors, they do not enforce regulations or compliance. It may also be possible to integrate a variant of the Inspectorate model with the accreditation model.

The three activity areas—professional development, technical assistance, and organizational assessment—forge the critical link necessary to convert RIDE’s policy objectives into organizational practices and student outcomes. Thus, these activities should represent the core activities of the proposed new

Division of Teaching and Learning described in the next section of this report. This is the division which connects RIDE to schools. Because this division represents the “front line” of the Department, it must be highly competent. One of the Commissioner’s principal objectives should be to build the personnel capacity of this division.

External Control

Department of Administration oversight of RIDE is necessary. However, the manner in which such oversight occurs is crucial. An appropriate Department of Administration role is to ensure that RIDE adheres to the budget enacted by the state Legislature and approved by the Governor. This can be accomplished through initial budget submissions and via end-of-fiscal year reviews and audits. It is not also necessary for the Department of Administration to engage in pre-expenditure line item audits. Whatever executive legislative branch action necessary to remove this unnecessary regulation is in order. One should keep in mind that through gubernatorial Regent appointments, and ex-officio Regent service from the legislature, RIDE is not an independent operating unit in danger of flying out of executive or legislative branch orbit.

Internal Oversight Activities

As mentioned in the findings section of this report, RIDE currently oversees local school district grants (federal and state categorical aid program) twice. One review occurs when RIDE program officers sign off on categorical plans submitted by local school district. The other review occurs within the finance division. What is good for RIDE in its relationship with the Rhode Island Department of Administration, is good for local school districts in their relationship to RIDE. Once programs and related budgets are approved, then RIDE's role should be to undertake selected end-of-year audits.

Personnel System Changes

Alterations in and reexamination of some personnel and personnel-related procedures could enhance RIDE's ability to fulfill its mission. First, every effort should be made to move collective negotiations for both classified and non-classified employees to a collaborative bargaining model. The collegial union-management relationships that generally are the byproduct of collaborative bargaining have two salutary effects. They simultaneously reduce tension and enhance communication in the workplace. In addition, collaborative bargaining generally opens the doors to union-management discussion of and agreement about a wider range of significant professional issues.

Second, appropriate officials should examine the interplay between civil service protections and personnel rules and regulations established by virtue of collective bargaining. Attention should be turned to consideration of a single set of personnel rules and assurances which can evolve either from the civil service system or from collective negotiations.

Third, Rhode Island's 20-year rule should be reexamined. To be sure, employee rights should be protected. At the same time, the organization needs sufficient flexibility to enable it to make changes as needs and priorities dictate.

Policy System Changes

Virtually every component of the policy system can contribute to maximizing the return on Rhode Island's education investment, and achieving the Regental and RIDE goals of enhancing opportunity and elevating performance by undertaking a series of symbolic and procedural actions.

Gubernatorial Actions

Symbolic Activities. If the recently elected Governor would demonstrate particular interest in education, specifying that this is a public policy dimension on which his administration wishes to leave a substantial positive legacy, there is a series of activities, all requiring almost no added resources, which could pay remarkable dividends.

For example, the Governor could make a major speech regarding the importance of RIDE restructuring, use the opening of a new RIDE building as an opportunity to reaffirm the state's commitment to public education, and continually mention in major public pronouncements, e.g., surrounding the opening of a new or renovated public school, that Rhode Island is making a sustained effort to elevate the quality of public education.

Regental Appointments. The newly elected Governor should pay far more careful attention to Regental appointments than did many of his predecessors. All appointments should be made in a timely manner, avoiding lapsed terms. Individuals considered for Regent positions should be held in high public regard. Their appointment should be used as an added opportunity to affirm gubernatorial commitment to education. Each new appointee should be sworn in at an impressive, though not costly, public ceremony with the Governor present. Each new appointment should be of an individual devoid of narrow special interest, capable of considering education statewide, and possessing a clear commitment to the welfare of students and schools.

Regental Nominations. In order to ensure fulfillment of the above-listed suggestions regarding Regental appointments, the Governor could emphasize the significance of the Regents by establishing a nominating panel of the state's most prestigious citizens and business and civic leaders. He could request of this visible and well known panel the names of highly regarded individuals to be considered for Regents' appointments.

Budget Savings Reinvested. The Governor should commit publicly that whatever cost savings eventually may accrue from RIDE reorganization will be retained in the RIDE budget for reinvestment in professional development and retraining of RIDE personnel and for purchase of modern technology. These cost savings will almost assuredly not be immediate. It will take time to implement the recommended organizational structure and, during a transition, treat current employees with the dignity they deserve and the due process Rhode Island's regulations demand. However, there might eventually be savings which the Governor should pledge to return to RIDE in order to promote the organization's effectiveness.

Infrastructure Renewal. Few messages regarding Rhode Island's ambivalence toward excellence in public education are as powerful as the condition of the building in which RIDE currently resides. It is not simply that the building has been permitted to fall into shocking disrepair and is an unpleasant environment as a result. The dysfunctional consequences extend further. Inability to regulate the temperature appropriately carves into the productivity of those employed there. Secretaries cannot easily type wearing gloves in the winter. One has the impression that plugging one more electrical cord into a wall outlet might trigger a building blackout. Without drastic renovation, the building cannot accommodate modern computing and telecommunication technology. In short, current plans to move RIDE to new facilities must not be impeded. Few changes are more important symbolically or practically than moving this agency to a new and modernized site.

Legislative Actions

Symbolic Activities. If added numbers of members of the Legislature would take education as an area of their intense interest and expertise and participate in debates regarding RIDE budgets and purposes, that in itself would serve to focus greater citizen attention on public education and the state's desire that the system be improved. In addition, legislators can participate in many of the same kinds of symbolic activities as mentioned above for the Governor. For example, a legislatively-sponsored Rhode Island Summit for Education Excellence could catalyze public understanding and symbolize legislative support.

Announcement of Intent. An activity of particular significance would be for the Legislature to adopt a joint resolution noting its support for RIDE reorganization and the significance it heralds for added State commitment to the improvement of public education.

Simplifying Fiscal Oversight. The Legislature can cooperate with the executive branch in reviewing financial procedures under which RIDE currently operates. Budgeting resources for a new fiscal year, thereafter approving obligations in detail, and auditing past actions is wasteful. Providing the Department of Education with greater fiscal discretion, within the boundaries of an approved budget, would facilitate efficiency on the part of RIDE and free other executive branch resources to be more productively deployed.

Regental Actions

Agenda Changes. The Board of Regents should reorient its public meeting agenda to concentrate on a limited number of items. These should clearly be demarcated as either for *action* or information. There should be nothing on an agenda which does not clearly relate to one of the following functions: (1) goal setting for either RIDE or for the learning and performance of Rhode Island students, (2) deliberations regarding what should be taught in school and what knowledge is of most value, (3) review of RIDE and system-wide performance reports and measures of statewide and districtwide student progress, (4) professional performance of the Commissioner, and (5) whatever ancillary application review, legal appeal, and adjudicatory activities Rhode Island's code specifies as a Regental responsibility. As many other items as possible, particularly those in which RIDE staff have conducted a statutorily mandated oversight activity, should be placed on a consent calendar intended to expedite their handling at a public meeting.

Infrastructure Changes. Symbols convey significance and seriousness of intent. The Regents should also be aware of the message their physical surroundings convey. Regental meetings should be held in more attractive physical settings. These need not be excessively decorated or opulent. Rather, the Regents should meet in a room, however simply furnished, which conveys the dignity of their office and the importance of their mission.

Scheduling Changes. A revised agenda, such as specified above, should provide an opportunity to compress important discussions into a once-a-month endeavor. If a second monthly Regents' meeting is to be held, it should be devoted either to Regental subcommittee operations, encompass appeal and adjudicatory operations, or both.

Performance Measurement. Regents should cooperate with the Commissioner in the construction of a series of performance measures for

the Department. Once polished, such measures should be matters of monthly, quarterly, and annual discussion by Regents. These measures could encompass obvious items such as Rhode Island student and school performance, written in a manner intelligible to informed laypersons and useful for the media. In addition, however, there should be developed measures regarding the performance of RIDE itself. These might include matters such as systematic appraisals of RIDE by local school district and other external constituents, measures of RIDE engagement of local school district staff in collaborative professional networks, indicators of RIDE project completion, and measures of internal RIDE personnel morale and productivity.

Commissioner Changes

Communication. Internal interview and survey results reveal that the Commissioner is widely admired both for his vision and his commitment to education improvement. Also, the Commissioner is widely perceived as isolated from RIDE staff's ideas and opinions and insufficiently decisive. The alleged isolation is, at least partially, a communication problem. Recommendations in the following section regarding organizational realignment should improve communication and access to the Commissioner and reciprocal Commissioner access to RIDE staff. However, structural changes alone cannot solve all of these perceived problems. The Commissioner must redouble his efforts at communicating clearly, assigning responsibility precisely, following up on assignments to ensure closure and accountability, and making it clear when an issue has been aired sufficiently and is now scheduled for action.

Clarity. The Commissioner is generally agreed to have painted a productive picture of the means for achieving education reform in Rhode Island. However, the greater the specificity with which that picture can be painted the greater the probability of measuring progress toward the goal. The RIDE vision can benefit from even greater specification than presently exists.

Implementation Scheduling Horizon

The above described recommendations are set forth as though they were of equal value and could be implemented immediately. Neither of these assumptions is accurate. For example, the recommended new organizational structure will necessitate the redrawing of job descriptions, recruiting of personnel for new positions, and retraining of personnel for other positions.

A consulting report such as this can suggest overall direction and organizational form. It cannot reasonably provide the extraordinary specificity necessary to transform recommendations into reality. Moreover, it

is difficult for an organization such as RIDE simultaneously to conduct its day-to-day work and implement organizational change. Consequently, we recommend further that there be established a temporary position, even if informal, in the Office of the Commissioner which is charged with overseeing and coordinating organizational change efforts. This position might well need to exist up to five years. The individual charged with this operation might hold dual functions, such as overseeing an operation in the Administrative Services Division also. Moreover, reducing the number of Director positions also will call for a period of transition. This transition can be eased by reliance on early retirement incentives and reexamination of the previously described 20-year rule.

A matrix of change activities and administrative responsibilities will have to be developed. New job descriptions will have to be written. Outside recruitment efforts for the Associate Commissioner of Teaching and Learning will have to be launched. Professional development activities for individuals expected to undertake new functions will have to be constructed. Measures for appraising RIDE's transition progress will have to be developed. The list of such implementation details could continue, but the point would be the same. There is a substantial distance between recommendation and reality.

The easy portions of such a massive transformation are the rearrangements of organizational components and operational items such as moving to a new building and restricting Regental agendas to high priority items. The more difficult steps are in building a new organizational outlook among professionals. The Commissioner and his staff have five leverage points on gaining such a new organizational outlook. Recruitment of new personnel, specification of job expectations for all personnel, training opportunities, self-evaluations and formal job performance appraisals, and organizational rewards, symbolic and material, are all means by which the Commissioner and other high level RIDE leaders can reshape the organization toward a collaborative, team oriented effort aimed at assisting local school districts and schools.

Appendix A

State Comparison References

Transforming State Education Agencies to Support Education Reform
National Governors Association, Center for Policy Research, Washington,
D.C.

Department of Education Commonwealth of Massachusetts Reorganization
Plan, February 1993.

Connecticut: Education Agenda (internal department circular)

New Jersey memo to Department of Education Staff from the Commissioner,
June 1, 1994.

State of Connecticut, State Board of Education, memo to State Department of
Education Staff from Vincent Ferrandino, Commissioner of Education, June
24, 1992.

Kentucky State Board for Elementary & Secondary Education Organization
Chart

Mission Statement, Vermont Department of Education

News Article from *The Day*, January 24, 1993 "Responding to the "two
Connecticut's"

New Directions for Education in Delaware: The Business Plan (draft),
October 15, 1992

Appendix B

RIDE INTERNAL SURVEY RESULTS

Responses are provided in percentages. Responses from non-classified staff are indicated in the first column, followed by classified staff responses.

1. The mission of RIDE is best described as:			
a. ensuring state and federal regulations are enforced	7	21	
b. developing and promoting a set of statewide learning goals		47	62
c. providing information/technical assistance		43	14
d. protecting the due process rights of students and teachers		2	3
e. promoting the professional development of teachers		2	0
2. Which of the following best characterizes your primary responsibility in your current job?			
a. providing professional assistance to local schools/districts	41	21	
b. enforcing federal and/or state regulations		17	4
c. responding to managerial requests		8	21
d. formulating state school improvement goals		11	0
e. supporting RIDE internal operations		22	54
3. What would enable you to do your job better?			
a. additional professional development opportunities		2	14
b. additional fiscal resources for the department		18	7
c. more input in decision making		14	7
d. better planning and organization		32	54
e. better communication across the organization		34	18
4. Advancement and recognition in the organization is based on:			
a. "don't rock the boat"		16	22
b. personal loyalty		57	57
c. objective assessment of job performance		15	4
d. length of service		2	17
e. sharing and promoting new ideas		10	0
5. RIDE decisions are principally determined by:			
a. the political system		45	52
b. the best interests of students		23	8
c. the need to protect jobs		0	8
d. enforcing federal and state regulations		13	20
e. maintaining the status quo		19	12
6. RIDE is most responsive to:			
a. parents and community interests		3	7
b. public officials		57	44
c. organized labor		7	7
d. business groups		0	7
e. educators		33	33
7. School districts view RIDE as:			
a. facilitators of school improvement		3	0
b. a regulatory impediment		20	45
c. overly political		7	0
d. disconnected from what schools do		57	21

e. reliable source of information and assistance

13 34

8. What would enable RIDE to best meet its future challenges?		
a. more flexibility in making decisions	18	8
b. greater specification of direction from superiors	35	27
c. less involvement with the political system	18	38
d. more opportunities for collaboration	24	8
e. greater opportunities for staff development	5	19

Items 9-17 were rated on a 5 point scale from Strongly Agree (1) through Strongly Disagree (5). Again, non-classified staff responses are provided first, followed by responses from classified staff.

	STRONGLY AGREE			STRONGLY DISAGREE		
	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Information is regularly shared with all staff members	6 3	18 9	21 36	31 18	24 33	
10. My work is shaped by RIDE's goals.	24 3	21 19	31 19	10 38	13 22	
11. RIDE's goals can realistically be accomplished.	6 0	26 19	22 53	26 19	19 9	
12. RIDE's goals are consistent with <i>my</i> views about the appropriate role of a state department of education.	17 3	34 24	23 39	16 15	10 18	
13. When I have a professional problem or complaint I feel comfortable discussing it with RIDE co-workers.	23 12	27 15	19 27	17 18	14 27	
14. RIDE is able to effectively promote school improvement.	3 0	19 12	33 52	27 21	19 15	
15. Once a decision is made, RIDE consistently implements it.	3 0	6 9	23 42	36 21	32 27	
16. I have the ability to influence decisions that affect me and the work I do.	26 3	25 39	16 18	12 3		
17. My input is incorporated into RIDE decisions.	10 0	20 0	30 30	24 24	17 45	
18. If I could begin my career anew, I would still choose to be employed by RIDE.	Yes No	59 41	44 56			
19. Given all your knowledge, and the reasoned comparisons you are able to make from experience with other organizations, both public and private, what global grade would you give RIDE?	A 1 0	B 16 16	C 47 63	D 29 13	F 6 9	(non-classified staff) (classified staff)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT SURVEY RESPONDENTS:

	Non-classified	Classified
Male	52	3
Female	48	97
Years working for RIDE:		
0-5 years	19	39
5-10 years	21	29
10-15 years	10	6
15-20 years	25	13
20+years	25	13
Have you ever been employed in a K-12 school district?		
Yes	54	15
No	46	85