



## 2019 Rhode Island Reads Advocacy Agenda

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

### School Readiness

- Support the Governor's FY20 Budget Proposal to increase funding for **State Pre-K** by \$10 million.
- Support the Governor's FY20 Budget Proposal to add \$850,000 million to the **Child Care Assistance Program** to increase rates for preschool age children and to implement tiered quality rates for CCAP children enrolled in Family Child Care (Article 15).
- Promote passage of H-5106 and S-282 to **improve the quality of child care for all age groups of children** in the Child Care Assistance Program, with increased rates for all child care providers serving low-income families and larger increases for higher quality programs.
- Support the Governor's Proposal to **establish a pilot program** for low-income parents attending college or post-secondary education to receive a child care subsidy (\$200,000).
- Invest \$650,000 in state resources and secure a Medicaid match to fund **proven family home visiting programs** (Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership or Parents as Teachers) that provide parenting support to vulnerable families with young children.
- **Improve the state's paid family leave program** to increase the number of weeks available to bond with and care for a new child and to ensure low-wage workers receive adequate wage replacement to be able to take time off when they have a baby.

### Summer & Afterschool Learning

- Promote the recommendations that will be made by the **RI Out-of-School Time Learning Commission** that was passed during the last legislative session.
- Promote passage of H-5106 and S-282 to **improve the quality of afterschool and summer programs** by establishing a tiered quality rate structure and increased rates for the school age children in the Child Care Assistance Program.
- Protect federal funding for **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**.

### Chronic Absence

- Promote passage of H-5009 that would require school districts to adopt **evidence-based approaches to reducing chronic absence** in the early grades (K-3).

## Learning to Read

- Support legislation that will call for **high-quality curriculum** adoption/implementation in Pre-K-12 including in kindergarten and the early grades.
- Implement a statewide **Kindergarten Entry Profile** to provide information to teachers and policymakers about children’s early learning and development.
- **Support K-3 dual language education** by promoting passage of H-5192 and S-198 which would establish and provide funding for dual language education to promote bilingualism and biliteracy.
- Support passage of legislation and funding so the Rhode Island Department of Education can provide adequate professional development opportunities so K-3 teachers and reading specialists can **identify and provide evidence-based interventions for students with dyslexia** (H-5426, H5887).
- Support the implementation of the successful \$250 million bond initiative for school construction and renovation to **ensure PK-Grade 3 students have high-quality learning spaces**.

## Early Elementary Education

- Support Article 10 **requiring every school district in Rhode Island to develop a plan to improve transitions into kindergarten** and establishes a goal of aligning early learning standards, curriculum, instruction and assessments from Pre-K through Grade 3. Requires state agencies to identify ways to align state systems to support early childhood education, including funding an integrated early childhood data system that centralizes early learning data across multiple state agencies.
- **Support adequate funding for English Learning instruction** starting with the additional \$2.3 million for English Learners in Governor’s budget.

## Urgency for Closing Achievement Gaps in Third Grade Reading

As of 2018 on the new RICAS test, 40% of RI third graders met expectations in reading, however wide achievement gaps exist by income and by race and ethnicity as shown in the table below.

  
**Third Graders Meeting Expectations on the  
RICAS English Language Arts Assessment, Rhode Island, 2018**

SUBGROUP	
Male Students	36%
Female Students	45%
English Learners	13%
Non-English Learners	44%
Students with Disabilities	9%
Students without Disabilities	46%
Low-Income Students	26%
Higher-Income Students	56%
White Students	50%
Asian Students	44%
Black Students	26%
Hispanic Students	25%
Native American Students	24%
<i>ALL STUDENTS</i>	<i>40%</i>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS), 2018*. Low-income status is determined by eligibility for the free or reduced-price lunch program.