

Rhode Island's children will be responsible for providing the leadership, creativity, and productivity to strengthen the quality of life in the state in the years ahead. To prepare our children for this responsibility and for a lifetime of success, our families, schools, and communities must work together to provide today's students with a comprehensive education that meets their needs and promotes their well-being at each stage of their development. A whole child approach to education will ensure that our state's children are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged—and able to reach their full potential.

Rhode Island ASCD has promoted whole child education since 2009. We began by collaborating with partner organizations in the state that were doing similar work and then produced a [policy paper](#) (PDF) that examined how well the state's regulations and policies support the whole child. Following up on those efforts, we worked to have a joint resolution introduced into the Rhode Island legislature. Just this spring, the Rhode Island General Assembly affirmed the importance of a whole child approach to education by passing a resolution that expresses the assembly's intent to model these concepts in its own work and to join with other stakeholders who support the whole child.

Those who care about Rhode Island's future—a parent, an educator, a business leader, a policymaker, or a concerned citizen—can help the state fulfill its commitment to whole child education. To get started, you can refer to these initial ideas, organized by the five whole child tenets, to help you put this vision into action. One initial step is to consider nominating an exemplary school for [RIASCD's Whole Child Recognition Award](#). This resource also highlights some of ASCD's free resources to help continue your work to ensure all students receive the comprehensive education and support they need to attain college, career, and citizenship success.

### Healthy

#### Educators

- Facilitate students' access to health, mental health, and dental services.
- Offer a variety of extracurricular activities that provide students of all abilities with positive physical, social, and emotional experiences.

#### Parents and Community Members

- Routinely take your children to preventative medical and dental checkups; regularly screen for vision, hearing, dental, speech, and orthopedic concerns; administer recommended immunizations.
- Maintain and promote your communities' sports and recreation programming, green spaces, community gardens, and more.

#### Policymakers

- Support school-based/linked health clinics, particularly in underserved areas, that provide necessary and convenient health services to students, their families, and the community.
- Promote a well-rounded curriculum that includes physical and health education as part of the core academics that all students should master.

## **Safe**

### Educators

- Consistently reinforce school and classroom expectations, rules, and routines, and work with families to teach students how to manage their own behavior.
- Establish a positive school climate where students feel valued, respected, cared for, and motivated to learn, and regularly assess the school climate, including staff, family, and student perceptions.

### Parents and Community Members

- Provide children with safe transportation to and from school, from chaperoning bus stops to establishing safe walking routes.
- Encourage school and community organizations to provide safe and chaperoned activities for students both before and after school.

### Policymakers

- Establish anti-bullying legislation that specifically defines intimidation, bullying, and harassment; requires schools to develop anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies; and helps ensure enforcement of the policies.
- Establish policies that support social-emotional learning and character development.

## **Engaged**

### Educators

- Include students in schoolwide decision making and governance and promote student-led discussions and initiatives.
- Offer students academic credit for hands-on, community-based learning opportunities and allow students to participate in these opportunities during the school day.

### Parents and Community Members

- Provide your children with age-appropriate decision-making opportunities and responsibilities at home.
- Provide students with experiential learning opportunities, such as service learning, internships, and apprenticeships with local businesses.

### Policymakers

- Require schools, districts, and communities to measure and report student and family engagement activities and outcomes (i.e., volunteer rates; participation in after-school programming, community-based learning opportunities, and extracurricular activities; parent involvement data).
- Encourage schools and districts to establish course credit systems that award students with credits for participation in service learning, internships, and apprenticeships.

## Supported

### Educators

- Make sure each student is well known by at least one adult in the school, and provide new students with a mentor.
- Include advisory periods or structured time during the school day for students to connect with staff about their academic, career, and personal goals and challenges.

### Parents and Community Members

- Monitor your children's performance over time and take an active role in their progress.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and volunteer for your children's school and for their extracurricular events and activities.

### Policymakers

- Require schools to provide adequate counseling and support services to students, ensuring that every school meets the recommended ratio of at least 1 counselor for every 250 students.
- Support parent education and family literacy programs.

## Challenged

### Educators

- Provide relevant and challenging coursework in a wide array of subjects through a variety of pathways (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual-enrollment programs) to all interested students.
- Leverage the Common Core State Standards to develop each student's critical-thinking and reasoning skills, creativity, ability to collaborate, problem-solving competencies, global awareness, and technology proficiency.

### Parents and Community Members

- Communicate regularly with your children and their teachers to identify opportunities to extend their learning in areas of interest and to support growth in the areas that are challenging.
- Partner with schools to ensure their curricula, instruction, education experiences, and extracurricular activities prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need for success in the workplace and in further education.

### Policymakers

- Recognize and reward schools that are successful in helping students of all backgrounds master challenging coursework.
- Hold schools accountable for student achievement using multiple measures of performance and growth across all core academic subjects and require meaningful and transparent public reporting of this information.

## Sustainability

### Educators

- Review district and school improvement plans for alignment with whole child practices and policies.
- Ensure educator evaluation process and professional development plans emphasize a whole child approach to education, are individualized to meet staff needs, and are coordinated with ongoing school improvement efforts.

### Parents and Community Members

- Share ideas, research, data, and resources to help your local community provide a coordinated whole child approach for each student.

### Policymakers

- Review existing policies and regulations for alignment with the whole child tenets.
- Support full implementation of a whole child approach to learning and teaching in all Rhode Island schools.

## Resources

- **Whole Child Indicators:** View school-level indicators of a whole child approach to education and community engagement. [www.ascd.org/wholechildindicators](http://www.ascd.org/wholechildindicators)
- **ASCD School Improvement Tool:** Evaluate how well your school or district promotes a whole child approach to education and access strategies and resources matched to identified needs. <http://sitool.ascd.org>
- **Whole Child Recognition Program:** Learn about Rhode Island ASCD's efforts to recognize schools that demonstrate a commitment to action for the whole child and access the 2013 program application. <http://www.riascd.org/whole-child/riascd-whole-child-recognition-program>
- **Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child:** Leverage relevant research and real world examples of whole child education policies and practices to make the case for what works. [www.wholechildeducation.org/take-action/making-the-case](http://www.wholechildeducation.org/take-action/making-the-case)
- **Whole Child Community Conversations:** Explore and discuss how all stakeholders in your community can work together to support the whole child. [www.wholechildeducation.org/take-action/comm-convos](http://www.wholechildeducation.org/take-action/comm-convos)
- **Whole Child Blog and Podcast:** Hear from experts and practitioners in the field about the steps that schools and communities can take to move along the continuum of a whole child approach to education—from implementation to sustainability to culture. [www.wholechildeducation.org/blog](http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog) and [www.wholechildeducation.org/podcast](http://www.wholechildeducation.org/podcast).
- **Whole Child Partners:** Learn about the education, health, arts, and civic organizations that can help you support whole child education. [www.wholechildeducation.org/about/partners](http://www.wholechildeducation.org/about/partners)

To learn more and to take action, go to [www.wholechildeducation.org](http://www.wholechildeducation.org) and [www.riascd.org](http://www.riascd.org).