

Funding Rhode Island's Schools



S3015 and H8351

Senate Bill 3015 and House Bill 8351 will establish the Rhode Island Education Funding and Accountability Act, which would include a revised and revamped formula for funding all levels of public education in Rhode Island.

Why does Rhode Island need a new funding formula?

- ☐ Rhode Island's original funding formula was enacted 15 years ago and needs to be modernized to address the current state of need.
- ☐ Currently, the amount invested in a child's education significantly depends on where they live, not what they need to succeed which is inequitable.

How will students' needs be better met with a new funding formula?

- ☐ Investing in education yields significant economic returns not only for our students but for our state as a whole. Under the proposed new formula, more costs will be shifted to the state from municipalities, thus directing more dollars directly to educational outcomes.
- ☐ Students who are economically disadvantaged, multilingual learners, or have disabilities require more support to succeed and are currently not receiving adequate resources. This proposed funding formula strategically directs resources in an equitable way to those who need them most.





What will be different?

- Under the current funding formula, costs like transportation, building upkeep, and early childhood screening fall entirely on municipalities, regardless of their ability to pay, which diverts funding from other needed areas of education.
- Under the new proposed formula, the state would be responsible for creating and funding a system to ensure **universal early childhood screening for all children ages 3-5**.
- The new formula will **increase the Student Success Factor weight from 40% to 50%** to support economically disadvantaged students, and will use administrative data (such as tax records and public benefits) to identify these students more accurately.
- **The state will bear the cost of transportation** for students who need to be transported across districts, including those in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, foster care, and students experiencing homelessness.

Primary Shifts in How Education will be Funded and Accounted for

01

It will account for the **full cost of education** in the funding system and share those costs more equitably between the state and the municipality.

02

Tailor educational costs per student more directly.

03

Require local contributions in line with a municipality's **ability to pay**.

04

Increase fiscal responsibility and reporting - visibility on how funds are being used and whether they're making a difference.