



# The Case for Statewide School Accountability Systems

*The Center for Assessment*

Webinar Presentation

June 10, 2025, 3pm EDT

# Who's Here?



**Chris Domaleski**  
*Associate Director*  
Center for Assessment



**Angélica Infante-Green**  
*Commissioner of*  
*Elementary and*  
*Secondary Education*  
Rhode Island



**Michael Petrilli**  
*President*  
Thomas B. Fordham  
Institute




**Carla Evans**  
*Senior Associate*  
Center for Assessment

# Today's Agenda

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- 3:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 3:10 Highlights from The Case for Statewide Accountability
- 3:30 Perspectives from a State Chief
- 3:40 Perspectives from a National Policy Leader
- 3:50 Panel (and audience) Discussion
- 4:15 Open Q & A
- 4:25 Closing
- 4:30 Adjourn

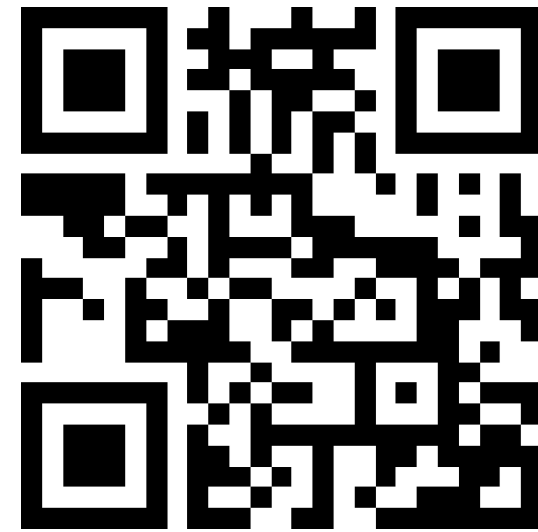


We hope you will interact with us by adding your questions into the Q & A feature!

# Highlights from The Case for Statewide Accountability

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# The Case for Statewide School Accountability Systems



The full paper is available for  
download at [www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org)

# Why did we write this paper?

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- The current administration has pledged to reduce the federal government's role in education.
- There is growing uncertainty about whether the assessment and accountability provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will be enforced.
- At the Center we asked:
  - What if states have increased latitude to implement statewide school accountability systems?
  - Should accountability as we know it be dismantled?



# Our Position

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*States should continue to implement high-quality school accountability systems, regardless of the level or nature of federal oversight.*

- We contend this is a **bi-partisan position**.
- It **elevates shared priorities** for improving educational outcomes



## *Aren't there problems with contemporary school accountability systems?*

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- Our position is not an affirmation that state school accountability systems developed under ESSA are flawless.
- The Center has and will continue to advocate for innovations and improvements.
- Let's fix the flaws but keep the foundation!
- Eliminating the state role in school accountability will do more harm than good.



## ***What is the Value of Statewide School Accountability?***

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1. Building public trust and engagement
2. Signaling what's important to district and school leaders
3. Monitoring group, school, and district performance
4. Supporting school improvement initiatives

# Building Public Trust and Engagement

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- Public education is a major state investment with broad impact for students and communities.
- State's have a responsibility to be transparent and show what is and isn't working.
- Clear information fosters engagement and encourages constituents to be responsive to the needs of the community.



# Signaling What's Important

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- Accountability systems help keep the focus on **core priorities**.
  - Statewide systems don't measure everything that matters
  - Districts and schools can and should attend to other priorities
- Why reinvent the wheel?
  - Evidence based programs and practices should be incentivized in accountability.
  - For example, students who encounter high-quality courses in high school are better prepared for postsecondary success.



# Monitoring Performance

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- Consistent accountability data helps education leaders evaluate and refine initiatives, allocate funding more effectively, and promote prioritized outcomes.
- Disaggregating results by student group helps identify gaps in opportunities, resources, and outcomes.
- Accountability data, with contextual information, can be used to identify and highlight promising practices.
- This can help scale and sustain improvement across the state.



# Supporting School Improvement Initiatives

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- Are accountability systems a measure, a treatment, or both?
  - We could have another webinar on this topic! But we contend that accountability systems play a vital role in supporting school improvement.
- At a minimum, a trustworthy state system can help to identify schools and groups that consistently underperform, which informs deployment of evidence based supports.
- When appropriate support is provided, we've seen evidence these initiatives can work.



# Why do we need a statewide system?

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- Without a state system priorities can become fragmented. Common performance goals align state, district, and school efforts with a shared vision of success.
- Statewide systems support meaningful comparisons.
  - For example, if districts and schools designed their own growth models, it would be difficult to meaningfully track and compare progress.
- The state has an important role to play. Public education is named in almost state constitution.

# The Importance of Reporting

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- Accountability systems are particularly effective when they include high-quality reports that provide good information about context, opportunities, and outcomes.
- Reporting is not a one-and-done event. It's an ongoing, interactive process with a broad range of constituents.
- We've seen growth in promising practices in this area
  - guides to support understanding and use
  - interactive workshops to share insights and promising practices
  - digital tools that allow users to create custom reports.
- Accountability reporting serves as a flashlight that can help policymakers, leaders, focus on the highest priority areas and guide decision-making.



# What's next?

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- Accountability systems have been critiqued for being narrow, unfair, too complex, ineffective etc.
  - I know, I've written about many of these issues!
- However, we argue that we won't improve accountability by dismantling state systems.
- We should continue efforts to improve systems by considering questions such as.
  - How can we provide more useful results in a timely manner?
  - How can we better link accountability systems with evidence based supports?
  - How should we hold accountability systems accountable? What evidence should we collect to monitor and document efficacy?



# Perspectives from a State Chief

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**Angélica Infante-Green**  
*Commissioner of Elementary and  
Secondary Education, Rhode Island*

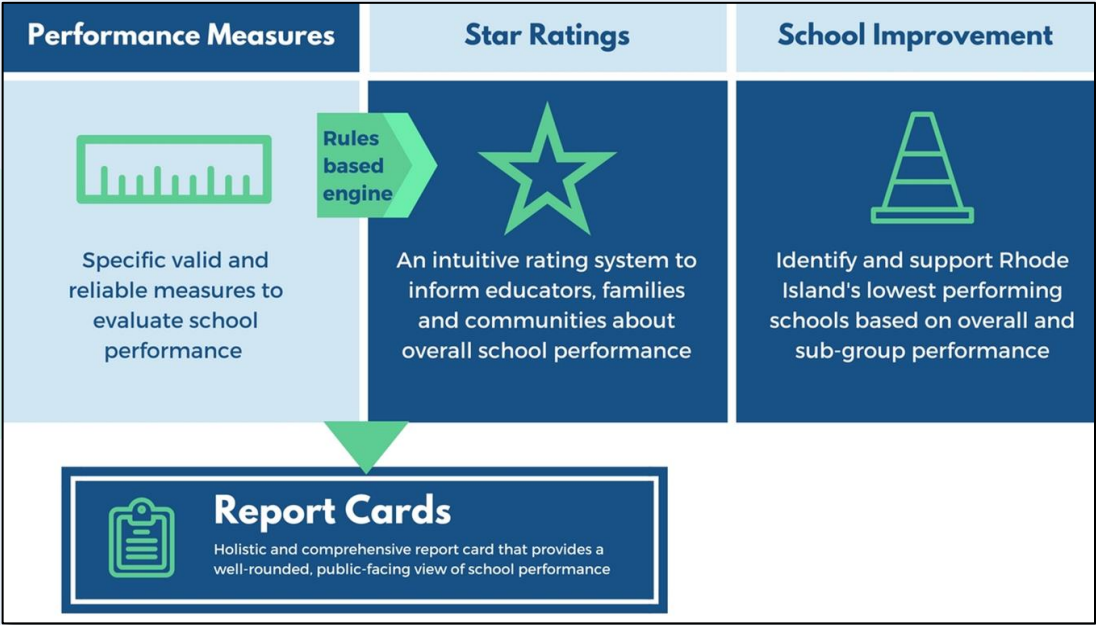
# RIDE's “Star Rating” Accountability System

RIDE’s comprehensive statewide accountability system is designed to provide: 1) clear signals of school performance through “School Star Ratings”; and 2) actionable information to LEAs and schools to inform strategic planning and improvement efforts.

## RIDE’s Performance Measures

		
Academic Performance	Student Success	College & Career Readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievement</li><li>• Growth</li><li>• English Language Proficiency</li><li>• Science</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Absenteeism</li><li>• Teacher Absenteeism</li><li>• Suspension Rate</li><li>• Exceeding Expectations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Graduation Rate</li><li>• Commissioner's Seal</li><li>• Postsecondary Success</li></ul>

## RIDE’s Accountability System Components



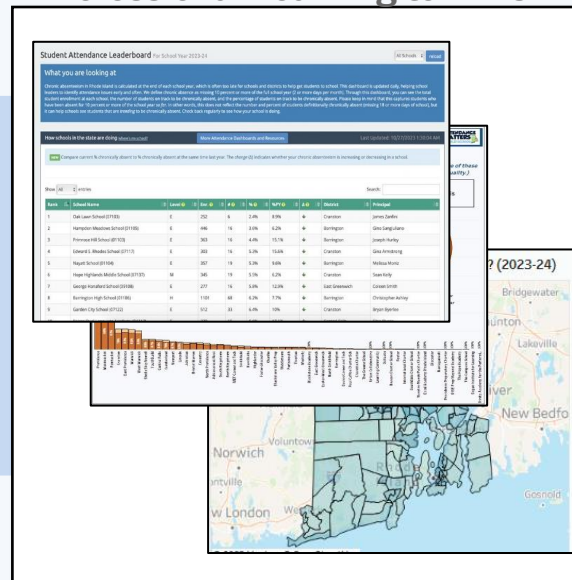
# Accountability in Action: Chronic Absenteeism

RIDE's nationally-recognized, statewide #AttendanceMattersRI strategy has helped significantly reduce student chronic absenteeism since the height of the pandemic.

## Galvanizing External Stakeholders through #AttendanceMattersRI Campaign



## Providing Data-Driven Supports and Professional Learning to LEAs



## Student-Centered Supports, Including Focusing on Mental Health

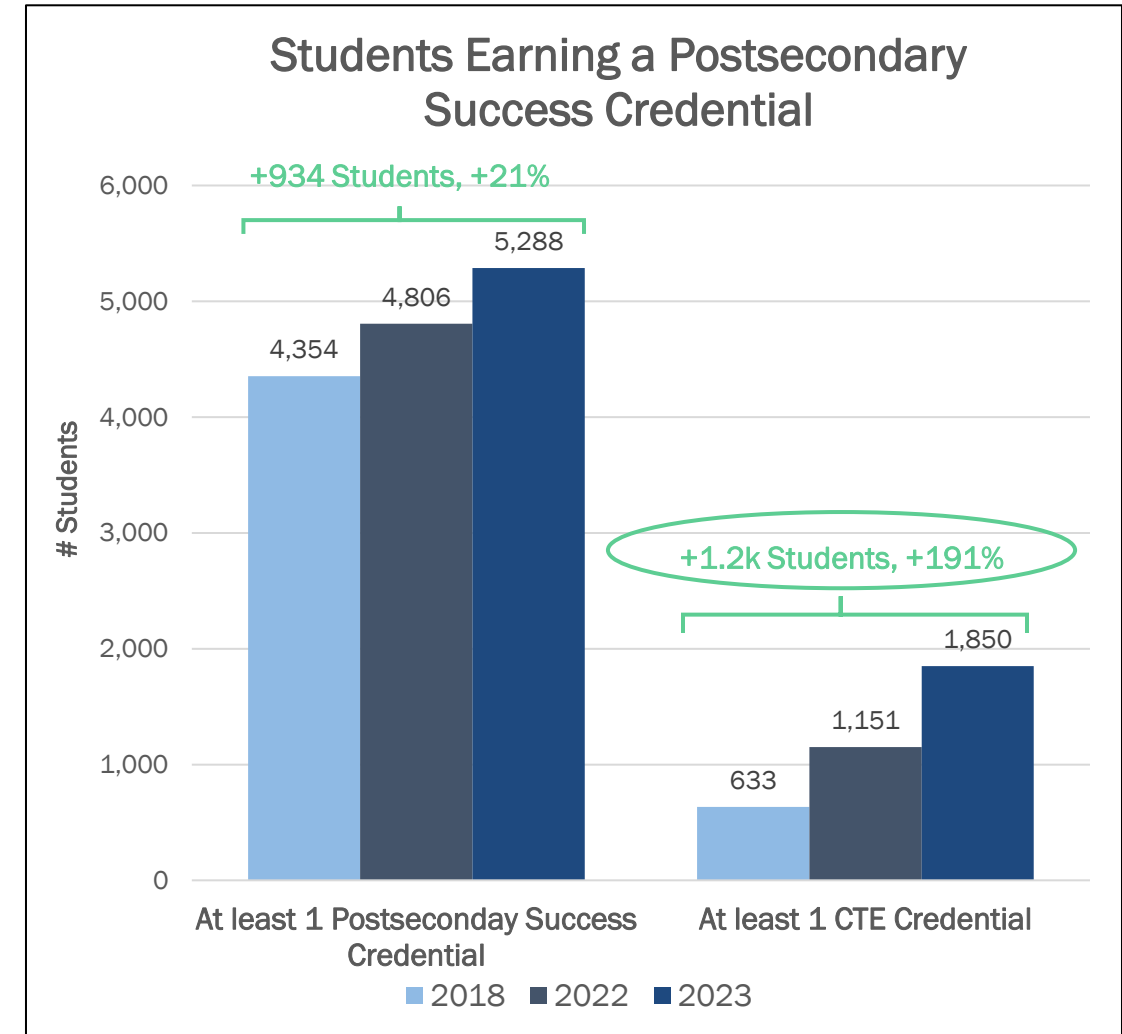


As a result, statewide **student chronic absenteeism has been reduced by almost 25% since the height of the pandemic**. However, 2024 statewide accountability results revealed **teacher chronic absenteeism hasn't kept pace**, spotlighting that as an area of focus and improvement in the upcoming year.

# Accountability In Action: Postsecondary Success

Since including the Postsecondary Success measure as part of RIDE's accountability system, RI has consistently seen a growth in the percentage of students earning a postsecondary success credential, especially in CTE.

- RIDE's postsecondary success measure evaluates how many graduating students are prepared to succeed in college and/or careers already with a postsecondary credential (ex: CTE credential, AP Credit).
- RIDE has taken a dual approach of holding schools accountable for this measure, while simultaneously supporting schools statewide to reimagine the high school experience and significantly expand CTE programs.
- As a result of both accountability and supports, students earning a postsecondary success credential has grown by 23%, with the number of **students earning a CTE credential growing by 191% over 5 years.**





# Accountability In Action: School Redesign

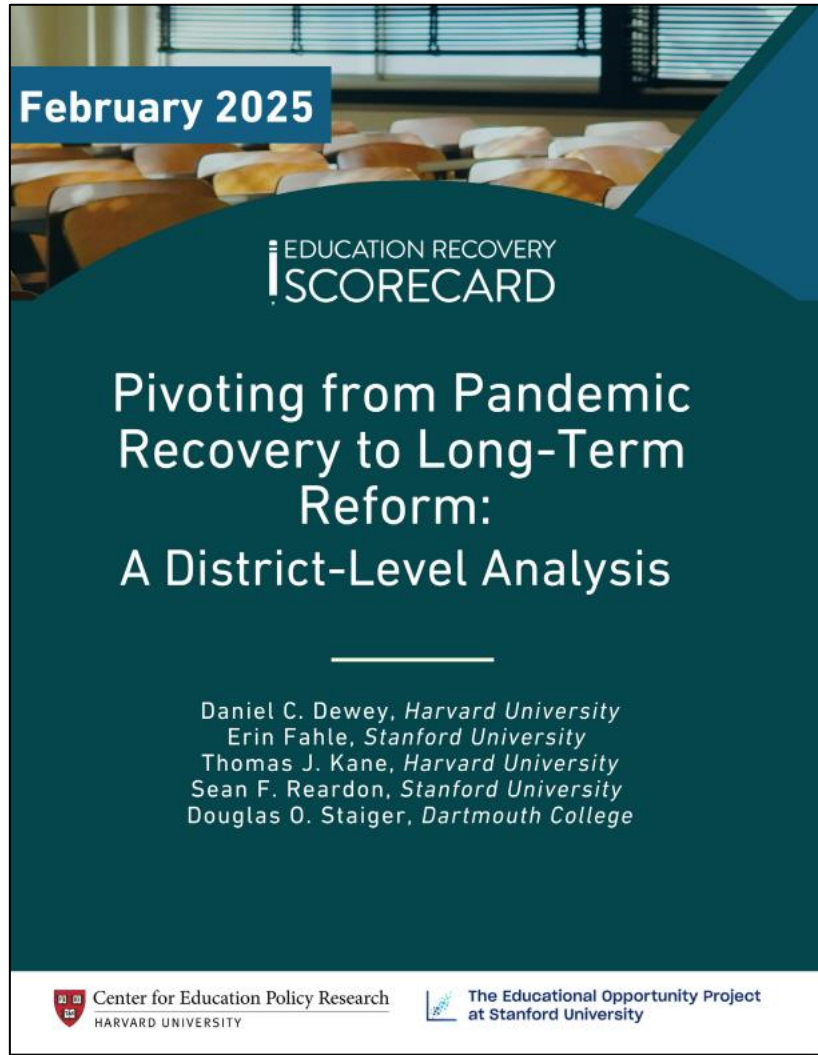
Since undergoing “School Redesign” – RIDE’s state-determined rigorous intervention for persistently low performing schools – the Juanita Sanchez Education Complex has undergone a dramatic transformation with tremendous results.



With a School Redesign model focused on life sciences career pathways, Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex in Providence is the **only school in the state to improve in 2024 by at least 5% points on all of the following categories:** SAT ELA and Math proficiency, student chronic absenteeism, and graduation rates.



# Accountability In Action: Pandemic Recovery



- Throughout and post-pandemic, Rhode Island **maintained a laser-like focus on student outcomes** – supporting LEAs and schools to leverage assessment data and accountability results to accelerate student learning.
- This year, the Ocean State was ranked in the **top 15 states in the country for recovery in math and literacy** according to the Education Recovery Scorecard, a national report crafted by experts from Harvard and Stanford Universities and Dartmouth College.
- Rhode Island is **recovering faster than all other New England States.**



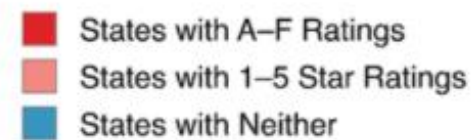
# Perspectives from a National Policy Leader

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**Michael Petrilli**  
*President*  
Thomas B. Fordham Institute



# Panel (and audience) Discussion

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# Open Q & A

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# Thank you for attending the webinar today!

The recording will be available on our website ([www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org))  
under **Resources** very soon.



[www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org)