



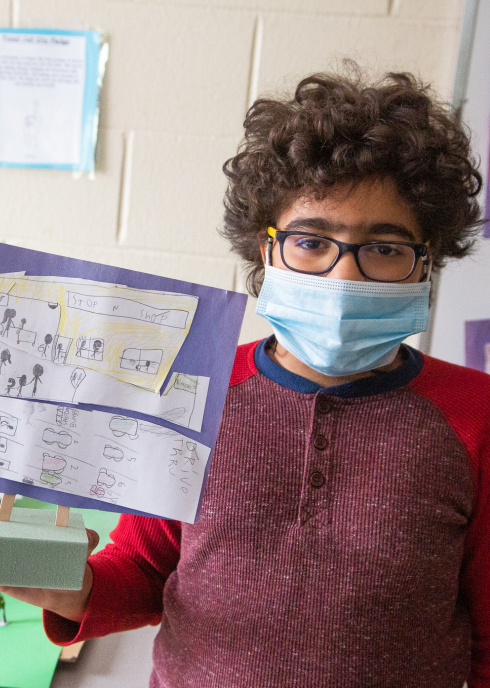
Annual Report

PREPARE RHODE ISLAND

IF YOU HAVE THE PASSION,
WE HAVE A PATHWAY

2021
EDITION





2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The myriad challenges inflicted by the COVID pandemic on state efforts to prepare our future workforce have been mighty. However, the success of the PrepareRI program set a rock-solid foundation that not only withstood the seismic disruptions of the pandemic, it held up to the demand for flexibility and creativity in its delivery model.

Prepare RI is an interagency program that prepares youth for college and careers by bridging K-12, postsecondary and industry forces to introduce, develop and prepare youth for the skills and learning they need after they finish high school. Aligned to R.I. industry growth forecasts, the program equips Rhode Island youth with the skills they need to realize high-wage, high-growth careers. It is a gateway to career exploration, advanced, college-level coursework, and hands-on learning. By the time the students choose to matriculate in college or enter the workforce immediately upon graduation, they will have been exposed to options and programs that will help them make the right choice for them.

Since its inception in 2015, the program has garnered impressive results. Participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses has increased dramatically, and a new program called Two Codes was launched to boost enrollment in computer science and civics AP courses. We expanded the number of students participating in career and technical education programs from 10 to over 40 percent statewide, we have doubled the number of students earning college credit (a.k.a., dual and concurrent enrollment) and/or industry recognized credential from 15 to 31%, so high school students can earn college credits at no cost and get a head start on their degrees.

During the COVID era, we adapted our popular high school internship and youth apprenticeship programs so that students could participate in the intensive virtual experiences via online cohorts. A generation that grew up using computers showed their teachers, mentors, administrators and all of us how truly adept they are in the electronic realm. To address learning loss, we held a summer-learning initiative for 14,000 students. Four new pilot readiness courses were introduced to middle and high school students to bolster core subjects, and the All Course Network was expanded to elementary school students so they can propel themselves forward into preparatory work.

Our world is different, and we had to change with it so our students can be prepared for the business challenges of tomorrow. We are ever grateful to all the teachers and educators, students and families, and community and industry partners who invested their time and resources to ensure that Prepare Rhode Island continues its mission.



Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D.
Commissioner of
Postsecondary Education

-Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner of Elementary
& Secondary Education

Matthew Weldon
Director, Department of
Labor & Training

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WHAT

PrepareRI is an initiative to prepare all Rhode Island youth with the skills they need for jobs that pay

Prepare Rhode Island (PrepareRI) is an initiative to create an integrated and connected system that prepares all Rhode Island youth for college and career.

PrepareRI benefits our students, businesses, and economy

PrepareRI benefits our students, businesses, and economy. PrepareRI aims to close the gaps between what students learn in school and what they need to be successful in life after their secondary education. The initiative was built on the belief that all young people – regardless of their background or intended life path – will need some form of postsecondary credential and work experience to succeed. For businesses, PrepareRI ensures that employers have the workforce they require to thrive in tomorrow's economy.

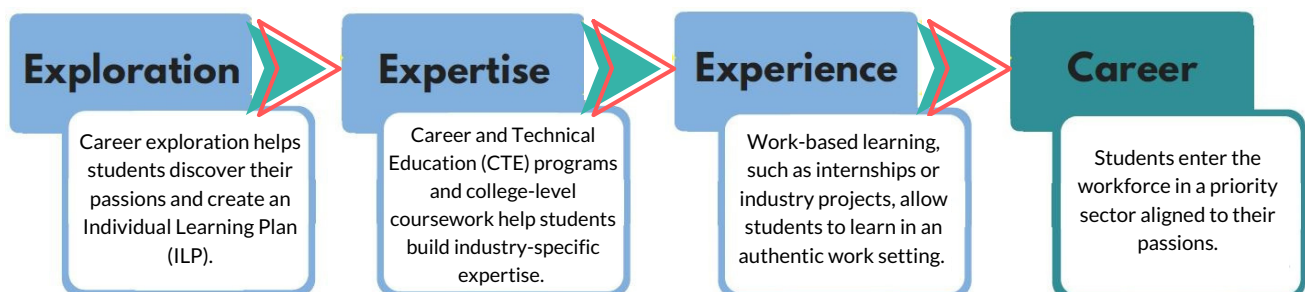
WHY

WHO

PrepareRI unites many partners around a common plan

PrepareRI unites many partners around a joint plan. As a result, our goals cannot be accomplished by any single agency or organization. With that in mind, PrepareRI is managed by an inter-agency task force that includes the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), and the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB). This task force partners with Rhode Island employers and communities to leverage our collective strength to achieve our ambitious goals.

HOW





Launched Rhode Island's first-ever summer learning initiative

Launched Rhode Island's first-ever summer learning initiative: Summer Academy for Interactive Learning (S.A.I.L.) with PrepareRI – a temporary program designed to enhance educational opportunities for the state's Pre-K through Grade 12 students who suffered learning losses during Rhode Island's COVID-19 health crisis. Government, K-12, postsecondary and healthcare leaders from all over the state came together to support the over 14,000 students who took advantage of these opportunities.

Created intervention courses for middle and high school students

Created intervention courses for middle and high school students: The Readiness Project Course Pilot was a partnership with WestEd to develop four Readiness Courses: 8th Grade Math, 8th Grade E.L.A., 11/12th Grade College Math, and 11/12th grade College E.L.A. The Readiness courses supplemented core instruction by strengthening essential skills students need for success in the next step—either High School or College—and reinforced content from previous grades. Since its inception, this project has expanded to semester-long courses offered in school or online through the All Course Network (A.C.N.).



Expanded statewide course offerings

The All Course Network (A.C.N.) expanded to elementary schools and increased enrichment courses through the Rethink Grant. The Rethink Grant was a \$10.9 million grant that the Rhode Island Department of Education won in response to COVID-19.



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We will continue to build and strengthen our enrichment offerings for all students and work more closely with our school communities to ensure our students have personalized learning opportunities every day.

—**Angélica Infante-Green,**
Commissioner of Elementary
& Secondary Education

Free Opportunities for Adult Learner

RI Reconnect: A free program for adults seeking help in changing careers, learning a new trade, or earning a degree or postsecondary certificate. Participants work with educational navigators from RIOPC who help them set goals, guide them through the process, and assist with breaking down barriers.

Resilience & Innovation

Conquering Learning
in New Ways



Created a centralized enrollment platform

EnrollRI is a new unified enrollment platform for charter, the All Course Network, and Career and Technical Education program enrollment through the Rethink Grant. The EnrollRI platform provides all families with easy access to high-quality education programs - and promotes equitable access for all parents, guardians, and students.

Hosted a virtual conference for educators:

The PrepareRI Virtual Summit took place in late October 2020. The theme was "Seize the Moment!" with over 100 attendees taking advantage of this platform and participating in workshops from local Community-Based Organizations like Pure Edge and Diversity Talks.

Over
100
people joined our
virtual summit this
year

Leveraged education and community experts

The PrepareRI Ambassador Program launched its third application cycle in November 2020. The twelve positions posted were in alignment with a federal Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K12 Education Models Grants (ESF-REM Grants) that RIDE was able to use to create a centralized enrollment platform and this new cohort of ambassadors. This year's cohort of ambassadors consist of strong education and community leaders who not only pushed the way that we approach different aspects of education but implemented effective strategies throughout the state of Rhode Island.



Pivoted to virtual work-based learning experiences

The PrepareRI Internship Program created the COVID-19 Innovation Challenge, a paid, virtual internship experience that challenged interns to form their student-run corporations, collaborate with remote teams, and think critically to build viable solutions that addressed the real-world challenges companies and industries are facing as a result of COVID-19.

Student Academic Enrichment

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) launched **EnrollRI** in December 2020 to provide **all families with easy access to high-quality education programs**. During the 2020–2021 school year, EnrollRI created detailed, data-driven family information tools and application resources for all participating **Charter Public Schools, All Course Network programs, and Career & Technical Education programs**. Each year, EnrollRI will seek to expand its program options and resources for Rhode Islanders. Our community needs engaging, detailed, and adaptive virtual resources now more than ever.

Courses offerings are comprised of in-person, virtual, and hybrid instruction models from course Providers. These Providers represent Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), private colleges in Rhode Island, public colleges through the Office of Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), and municipalities.

Create Your Future.

“

The majority of Americans who suffered job loss and economic setbacks in the pandemic were those who did not have **a postsecondary credential**. Raising our state's attainment is absolutely crucial to long-term economic stability. My office is addressing this by focusing on education attainment for two purposes: **equitable access and attainment, and alignment** to our state's labor market.

—Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D., Rhode Island Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

“

Our collective **fight for equity** starts with **equitable access** for all parents, guardians and students. We need one **easy and accessible** place for our students to learn more about **course opportunities** and our families to explore information on school options.

—Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education

The RethinkRI Grant Award: Rhode Island applied for and won a federal grant which allowed us to significantly expand course offerings and available seats for the Spring 2021 semester. The enrichment courses offered fulfilled the need for students and families to engage in noncredit-bearing courses.

By the Numbers

1,500

Additional ACN seats

2,530

RI Reconnect Participants

714

Participants requested support services

40 Additional ACN courses

9.3%
to
3.3%

the dropout rate decreased from the previous program

Rhode Islanders are persisting in their new jobs and staying on track to earn postsecondary degrees and credentials.

We're Better Together!

First-Ever Virtual PrepareRI Summit: PrepareRI hosts an annual summit to provide professional development opportunities for educators across the state of Rhode Island. In 2020, the PrepareRI Summit went virtual! The summit took place on Saturday, October 24, and the theme was "Seize the Moment!"

Over 100 attendees took advantage of this platform and participated in workshops such as:

- The Neuroscience of Stress and Reciprocity of Wellbeing (facilitated by Pure Edge)
- Reconciliation: The Power of Collective Accountability (facilitated by Diversity Talks)
- Leveraging Technology in the Classroom, Community, and Workplace to Support Executive functioning for All Learners (facilitated by RIDE's Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports (OSCAS))
- Supports for Secondary Schools in a Challenging Year (facilitated by RIDE's Office of College and Career Readiness)



Will you join the PrepareRI team?

PrepareRI Ambassador Program: Launched in 2018, The PrepareRI Ambassador Program seeks to create a space where education and community leaders can unite to move the needle of education in Rhode Island by dedicating their time to specific projects within the initiative. The Ambassadors come from different parts of Rhode Island's education landscape, such as district leaders, principals, school administrators, teachers, college professors, community leaders, parents, and others. They use their unique perspective and skills to advise the PrepareRI team, create resources and training to help their colleagues, and serve as spokespeople for PrepareRI.

Student Quote:

"It was perfect. The graphics design course gave me insight on tools I can use to create personal projects. Even if I didn't have an artistic career 'vision' photoshop is a great tool to have on your belt".



Since its inception, the program has had over 60 ambassadors who have supported projects such as:

- Work-Based Learning
- Advanced Coursework
- Computer Science (CS4RI)
- Financial Literacy
- Adult Education
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- School Counseling
- XQ+RI (high school redesign)
- Special Education

PrepareRI Internships

The PrepareRI Virtual Internship Program is a work-based learning experience for public high school students who are current high school juniors and are planning for college or a career upon graduation. Research suggests work-based learning helps students link learning with classroom instruction, leads to high graduation rates, gives students ownership of their learning and career exploration, and helps students develop critical soft skills.

The Virtual Internship Program provides students opportunities to explore careers via virtual project-based learning experiences through paid summer internships. It represents a strategic partnership between the Rhode Island government, private industry leaders, the public education system, universities, and non-profits across the state. Since its launch in 2018, the program, which is funded by the Governor's Workforce Board and American Student Assistance and managed by Skills for Rhode Island's Future, has supported 1,282 high school students from public schools across the state.

With the COVID-19 pandemic upending industries across the globe and changing the way we work, live, learn and socialize, Skills for Rhode Island's Future was forced to rethink and reimagine the PrepareRI Internship experience for the summer of 2020 and 2021. The result was the launch of the Virtual Innovation Challenge, a six-week, highly engaging, gamified internship where students:

- Formed their own student-run corporations
- Navigated a completely virtual work environment
- Learned from dozens of mentors, coaches, and guest speakers
- Built solutions to real-world problem statements from employers across Rhode Island
- Pitched those solutions to a panel of judges from across industries

Employer Problem Statement Examples:

- **PURVIS Systems** needs to design a high-speed video data transfer capability from the middle of the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii
- **Herrick and White** needs to attract new employees to the woodworking industry
- **Amgen** needs to incorporate Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging into their culture and daily operations

Find out more information at
www.skillsforri.com/prepareri

Key Stats for PrepareRI Internship Program:

- **746 high school students** participated in the Virtual Innovation Challenge in summer 2020 and 2021
- At least **50% of students** came from priority schools

What Students Are Saying

Student Quote:

"I am glad I participated in this program and I am proud of myself because this was my first job and I am excited to get a more permanent one and invest the money into making more money!"

Join Us to Learn New Skills

Am I Eligible?

- Current juniors in high school, going into their senior year
- Public school students
- 16 years old
- Eligible to work in the U.S.

Student Quote:

"I liked how it was online, because it was summer and I was able to multi-task."

Why Should You Apply?

- Jumpstart your career
- Get real-work experience
- Make good money and earn college credit
- Build your network
- Unlock your potential

What Next?

- **December:** Online application opens: prepare-ri.org/internships
- **February:** Application closes
- **February - March:** Student and Family Orientation Sessions; emails to students who complete the application
- **March - May:** Interviews with SkillsRI and employers
- **June:** Work Readiness Bootcamp
- **July - August:** Internships!



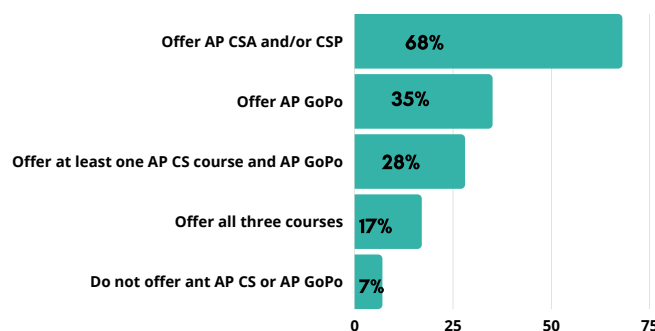
Two Codes

In partnership with the College Board, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has launched a state-specific Two Codes initiative to encourage greater participation and success in college-level computer science and civics courses. Two Codes is the College Board's effort to guarantee all students have access to deep learning experiences that build the knowledge, skills, and agency required to make a difference in the world—with an explicit focus on providing AP U.S. Government and Politics (AP GoPo) and AP Computer Science Principles (AP CSP) in American high schools.

Currently, student access to these courses varies. In SY19/20, of the **60** public high schools in Rhode Island:

- **41** Schools offer AP CSA and/or AP CSP
- **21** Schools offer AP GoPo
- **17** Schools offer at least one AP CS course and AP GoPo
- Only **10** Schools offer all three courses
- **4** Schools do not offer any AP CS or AP GoPo

Student Access to Two Codes



RI High School to College Pipeline: Offering College level Computer Science and Civics Courses

Engage

Central to the Two Codes work in Rhode Island is ensuring commitment and engagement from teachers and administrators at the school level. Therefore, RIDE and the College Board are establishing a second cohort of Two Codes Teacher Ambassadors to support this critical work.

Collaborate

In year one of the Two Codes initiative, eighteen teachers from nine schools across the state came together to ideate, collaborate, and create lesson plans included in a Two Codes playbook. The learning objectives and activities are centered on the intersecting shared principles of both courses.

Support & Grow

The second cohort of Two Codes Teachers will work closely with RIDE and The College Board to develop Two Codes specific professional development solidifying the learning done in year 1. Teacher will also use Two Codes Shared Principles to strengthen lesson plans, and project-based learning activities created for the Two Codes Playbook.

Reimagining High School

XQ+RI is a first-of-its-kind statewide initiative powered by a partnership between the Rhode Island Department of Education and XQ.

The XQ+RI Design Challenge launched in Spring 2019. The challenge engaged educators, students, families, and community members to reimagine high school in Rhode Island. We learned about the student journey and the story of their high school experience in order to shine a spotlight on longstanding inequities in student outcomes. We were called to action to respond to the needs of our students and educators to create a system that better supports the readiness of all of our students.

Three key themes were prevalent throughout the findings of the statewide Education Opportunity Audit:

- 1 High school is not preparing our students for their futures,
- 2 High school is not engaging enough of our students, and
- 3 High school has changed; we need to change how we support our students and their families.

20
RI high schools
received
planning grants
in 2019



What it will Take for XQ+RI to Rethink High School

To hear directly from stakeholders – current and former R.I. high school students, parents, teachers, and community members – XQ+RI launched a series of conversation and engagement opportunities – including student roundtables and a WaterFire celebration "Celebrating Educational Excellence" to gather input on RIDE's proposals to reimagine high schools and revise the secondary regulations.

Plan + Create

Engage + Listen

Execute + Launch

In June 2021, RIDE created the reimagining high school working group – composed of teachers, school and district leaders, industry leaders, higher education representatives, students, and families – to engage in reimagining high school authentically – explicitly rethinking the statewide high school graduation requirements.

The partnership between RIDE and the XQ Institute will continue until we engage with stakeholders from across the state – to hear directly from them – how we can reimagine every Rhode Island high school into a modern learning environment that motivates students to be innovative and reach their fullest potential. [So, stay tuned and join the conversation!](#)

HOW'D WE DO?



PrepareRI represents a strategic partnership between the Rhode Island government, private industry leaders, the public education system, universities, and non-profits across the state. In 2017 we set 8 goals centered around 8 different focus areas, all with the purpose of preparing all Rhode Island youth with the skills they need for jobs that pay. Check out how we did below!

FOCUS AREAS	BASELINE (2014 – 2015)	GOALS FOR 2020	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Employer engagement	97 out of 131 of CTE programs were in Priority Sectors.	All career pathway programs will be aligned to Rhode Island's high-demand career fields.	124 out of 228 of CTE programs are in Priority Sectors in AY19/20.
Diploma Plus: Industry credentials and college credit	15% of students earned college credit and/or an industry credential.	Over half of all high school students will graduate with college credit or an industry credential.	31% of students earned college credit and/or an industry credential in AY19/20.
Work-based learning	549 students participated in summer youth employment programs run by the local workforce boards in 2015.	All high school students will have access to work-based learning at their school.	1,182 youth participated in the statewide PrepareRI Internship program, summer WBL, in AY20/21 alone.
Career & Technical Education (CTE)	10% of all high school students participated in a CTE program.	Half of high school students will participate in a CTE program.	41% of all high school students participated in a CTE program in AY19/20.
Counseling & career exploration	Less than 1% (five) high schools are using an ILP (mainly for college transitions planning).	All students in grades 6-12 will have individual learning plans (ILPs), informed by students' experiences in career exploration programming	98% of LEAs (61 out of 62) have adopted an ILP provider, 77.7% of students accessed their ILP at least one time in AY20/21.
Outcome-focused accountability	Former accountability system only had math and reading proficiency scores.	Agencies will use data on students' college and career readiness for planning purposes.	RIDE rolled out a data transparency site on reportcard.ride.ri.gov and developed a new accountability system for LEAs.
Aligned funding	Each agency set their own priorities and aligned funding to them.	Align funding streams around a common strategy for building career pathway programs for all students.	GWB, RIDE, and outside funding all contributing to PrepareRI; Perkins V changing funding structures for CTE programs in AY20-21.
Outreach & professional learning	Professional learning and outreach was not occurring at an inter-agency level.	All schools in the state will participate in some form of PrepareRI professional learning.	85% of high schools statewide (53 out of 62) attended a PrepareRI Summit for professional development in AY18-19.

PREPARERI RESOURCES

Use this page to help you navigate all the important components and details of PrepareRI programs!

Focus Areas	Information	Link
Career Exploration and Individual Learning Plans	Career exploration, primary focused on elementary and middle school students, refers to programming that introduces you to a variety of possible careers. The Individual Learning Plans (ILP) provides students with opportunity to personalize their education experiences and supports student attainment of their goals.	www.prepare-ri.org/ILP
All Course Network	The All Course Network (ACN) enables students and their families to choose to enroll in an expanded number of free courses while they remain enrolled at their public school.	www.enrollri.org/acn
Computer Science for Rhode Island	Computer Science for Rhode Island (CS4RI) is a state initiative to bring high quality computer science (CS) learning experiences to all students.	www.CS4RI.org
Career and Technical Education	Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs consist of three or more courses that will help you earn an industry credential and prepare you to enter the workforce.	www.prepare-ri.org/cte
PrepareRI High School Internship Program	Paid summer internships for high school juniors with some of Rhode Island's top employers.	www.prepare-ri.org/internships
PrepareRI College Internship Program	Paid summer internships for first-generation college students who are enrolled at a Rhode Island college or university.	www.prepare-ri.org/internships_
Dual and Concurrent Enrollment	College coursework for students while still in high school at no cost. Dual enrollment courses are offered on campus and concurrent courses are taught at the high school.	www.riopc.edu/page/prepare_ri/
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Initiative	Completing the FAFSA is essential for students to qualify for federal, state and institutional funds.	www.prepare-ri.org/fafsa
PrepareRI Readiness Project	An initiative to help students, families, teachers and schools streamline the transition between high school and college.	www.prepare-ri.org/readiness-project