Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
R372A200032

Project Title: Rhode Island SLDS: Building School Capacity to Address Equity at Scale

Project Description: The Rhode Island (RI) Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE), RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, The University of Rhode Island, and Brown University have partnered to pursue a FY19 Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant focused on *Equity* in education.

This proposal intends to reduce disparities in outcomes across student groups by broadening access among local school and district leaders to both traditional and more novel types of school improvement data and supporting evidence-based solutions to focused, data-driven challenges. The work will enhance the capability of Rhode Island's existing SLDS to share data directly with local administrators and generate knowledge around equity-focused interventions by encouraging local experimentation, idea-sharing, and rigorous evaluation. We believe that the team we have assembled is uniquely qualified to take on this challenge, bringing multiple state agencies to the table including the state's flagship public university as well as a renowned local private university.

Efforts to target the needs of historically disadvantaged student groups in Rhode Island have been hampered by lack of strong evidence as to where to best focus attention and what to do once that focus is clear. While some equity issues are interrelated, policymakers face resource constraints that make it nearly impossible to meaningfully take on all needs at once. Both state and local administrators need better information concerning how and where to intervene when it comes to better serving particular groups of students; they need stronger evidence about the types of responses that are most likely to make a difference in specific contexts; and they need to be able to follow implementation and see effects so that they can make course corrections and take next steps as needed.

Our proposal takes on this set of challenges through three concurrent workstreams.

First, we aim to enhance existing SLDS structures in Rhode Island so that the system includes data that allows for a broader look at the challenges disadvantaged students face both inside and outside the classroom. In our case, this data will include additional student well-being and school climate outcomes that are directly pertinent to equity issues but often unavailable to local leaders. Outcomes of this workstream include linked, cross-agency data and additional SLDS governance and sustainability measures.

Second, we will follow the lead of a handful of other states such as Tennessee and Georgia that have integrated data tools within their SLDS platforms in order to place long-term strategic planning data directly in the hands of district and school administrators. This workstream will produce a data and planning tool, integrated with the Rhode Island federal and state grant funding system.

Third, we will launch a program of research and experimentation focused on identifying particular patterns around inequitable student access to resources and providing better insight to schools and districts around interventions that are likely to make a difference. This workstream will group schools and districts based on their "equity profiles" and generate evidence-based guidance for school leaders to implement in state-led learning networks.