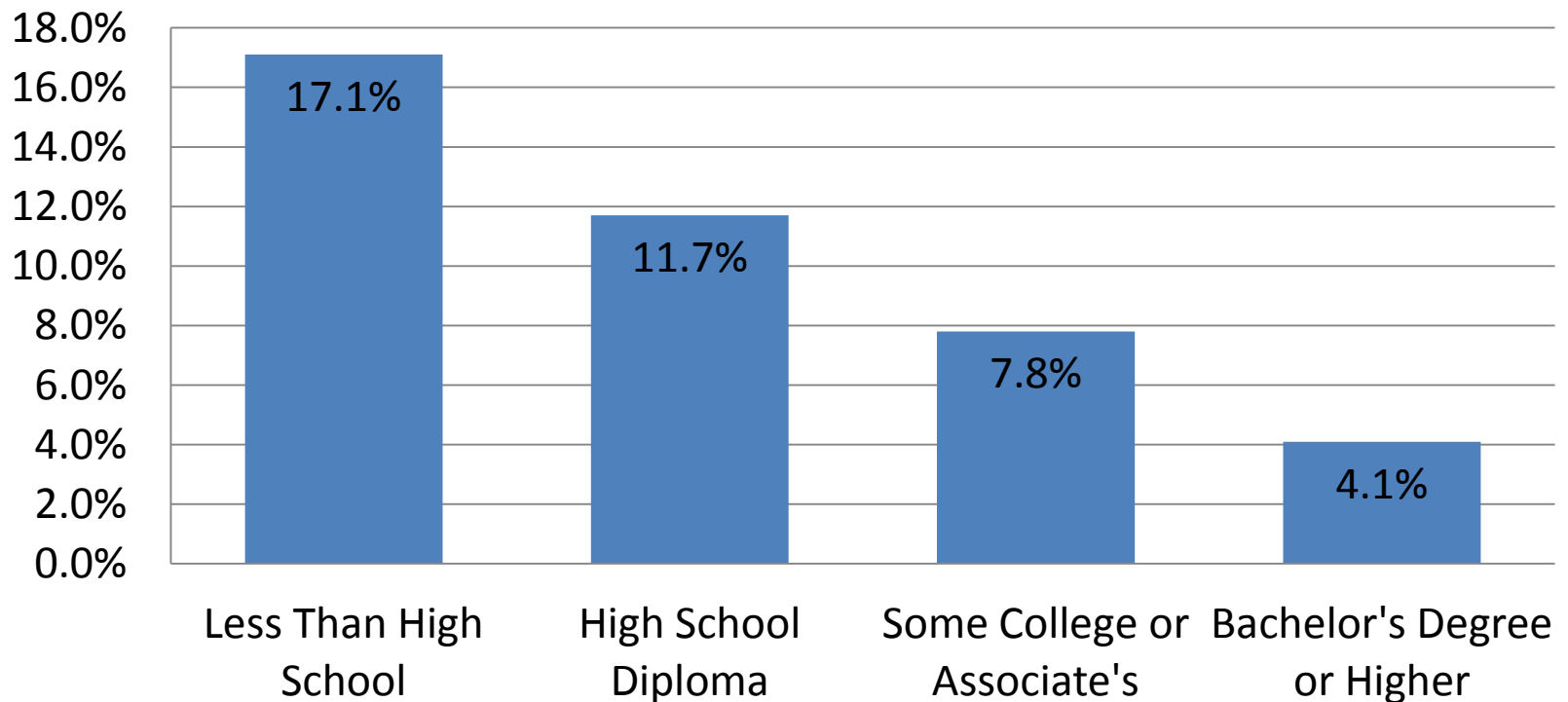# Data Highlights and Promising Practices for Improving the High School Graduation Rate

Policy Roundtable
March 23, 2015

#GradRI

Unemployment Rate by Education Level, Rhode Island, 2011-2013
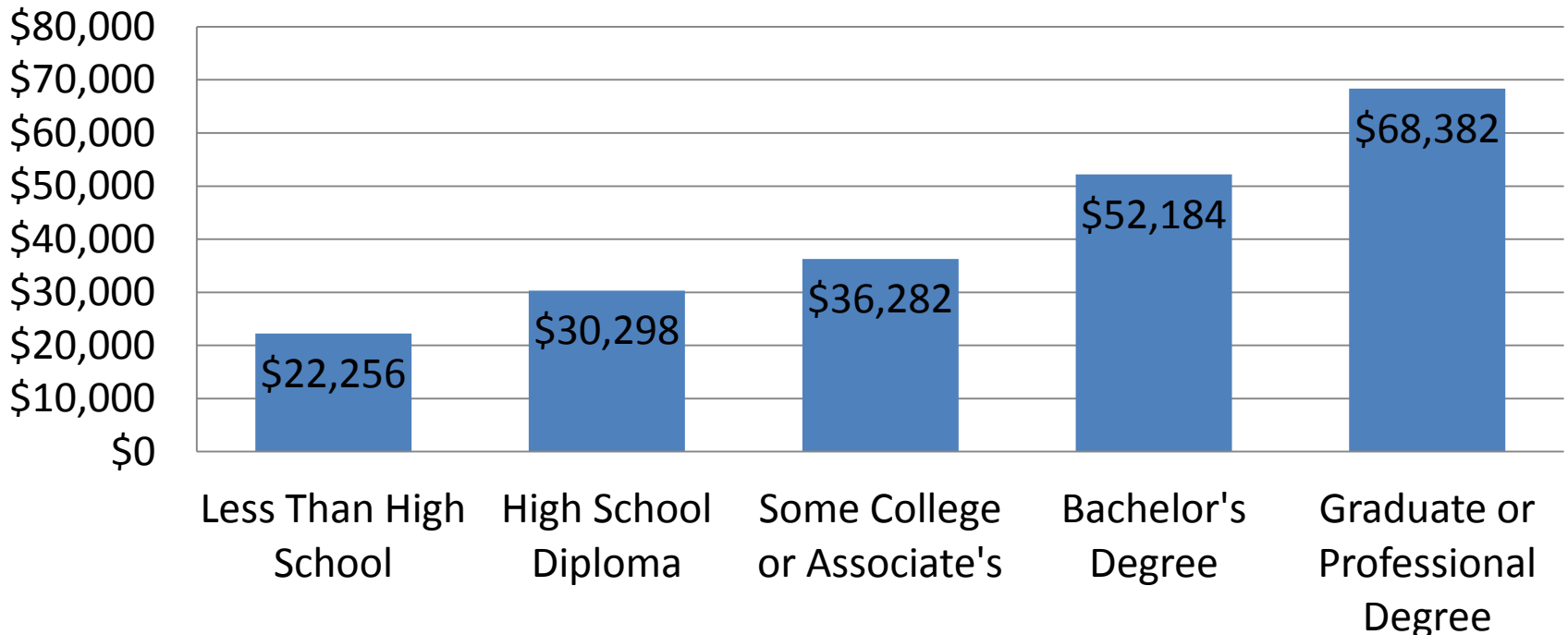

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2013, Table S2301.

Education: The Key to Economic Opportunity

Median Earnings by Education Level, Rhode Island, 2011-2013

Education Level	Median Earnings
Less Than High School	$22,256
High School Diploma	$30,298
Some College or Associate's	$36,282
Bachelor's Degree	$52,184
Graduate or Professional Degree	$68,382

How Rhode Island Ranks

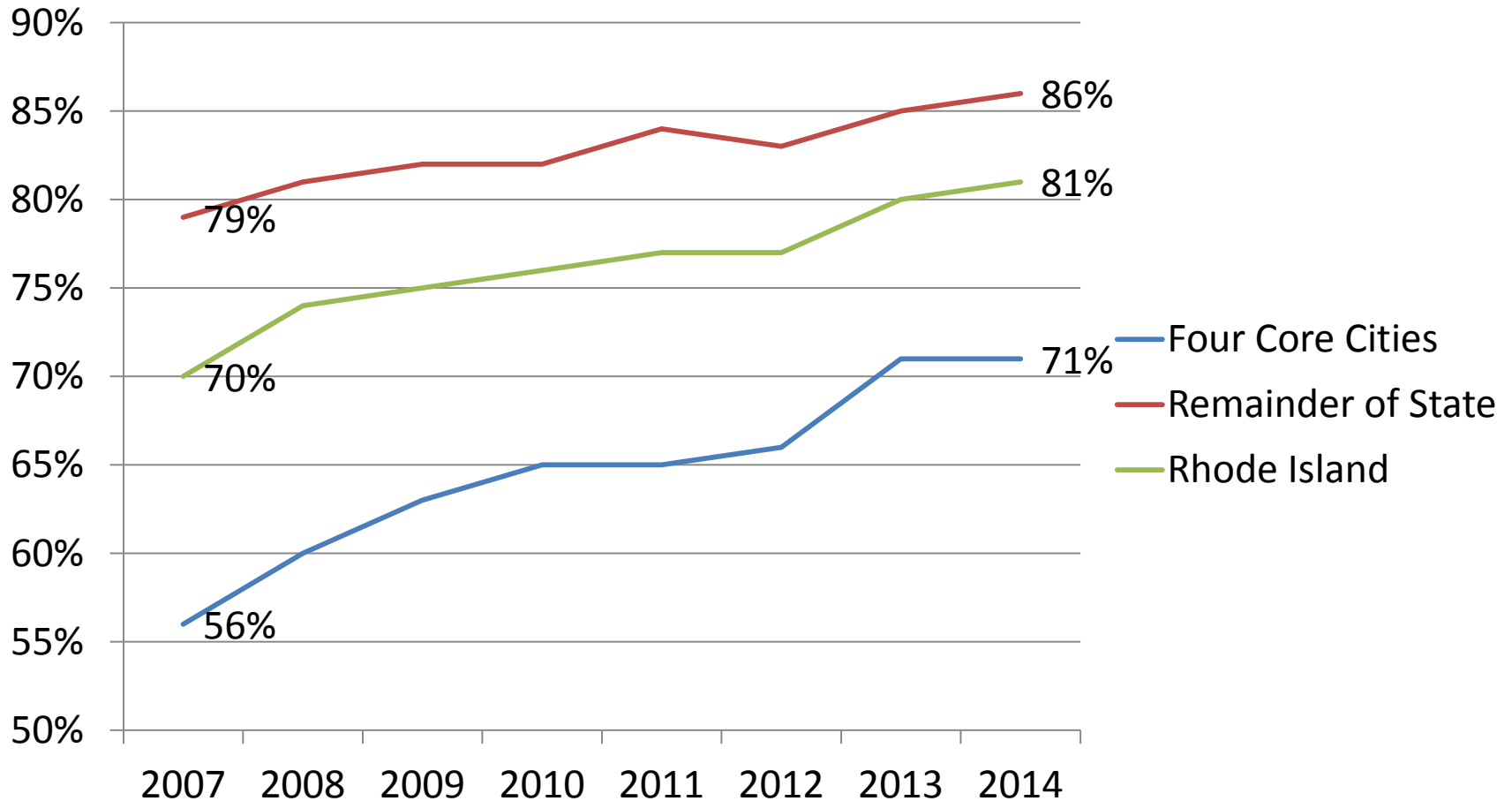| High School Graduation Rates	
	2012-2013
RI	80%
US	81%
National Rank*	*34th*
New England Rank**	*6th*

*1st is best; 49th is worst
**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: EDFacts. (2015). Consolidated state performance
report, school years 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13.
Retrieved February 10, 2015, from www.ed.gov

4-Year High School Graduation Rate

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2007 – Class of 2014.

Graduation and Dropout Rates
by Student Subgroup

Rhode Island Four-Year High School Graduation and Dropout Rates, by Student Subgroup, Class of 2014

|	COHORT SIZE	DROPOUT RATE	% COMPLETED GED	% OF STUDENTS STILL IN SCHOOL	FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
All Students	11,333	8%	2%	9%	81%
Females	5,520	6%	2%	7%	84%
Males	5,813	9%	3%	10%	77%
English Language Learners	1,140	15%	2%	11%	72%
Students With Disabilities	2,491	16%	3%	21%	60%
Students Without Disabilities	8,842	6%	2%	5%	87%
Low-Income Students	6,286	12%	4%	13%	71%
Higher-Income Students	5,047	2%	1%	4%	93%
White	7,373	6%	2%	7%	85%
Asian	294	5%	2%	4%	88%
Black	980	12%	2%	14%	72%
Hispanic	2,372	13%	3%	13%	72%
Native American	54	28%	6%	9%	57%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2014. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- Not reading proficiently by end of 3rd grade

- Sixth grade **a**ttendance, **b**ehavior, and **c**ourse performance

- Chronic absence

- Multiple suspensions or behavior problems

- Failing English or math in 9th grade

- Repeating 1 or more grades

- Lack of connection/engagement

Fourth-Grade *NECAP* Reading Proficiency Rates, by Income Status, Rhode Island, 2005-2013

Low-Income Students   Higher-Income Students   All Students
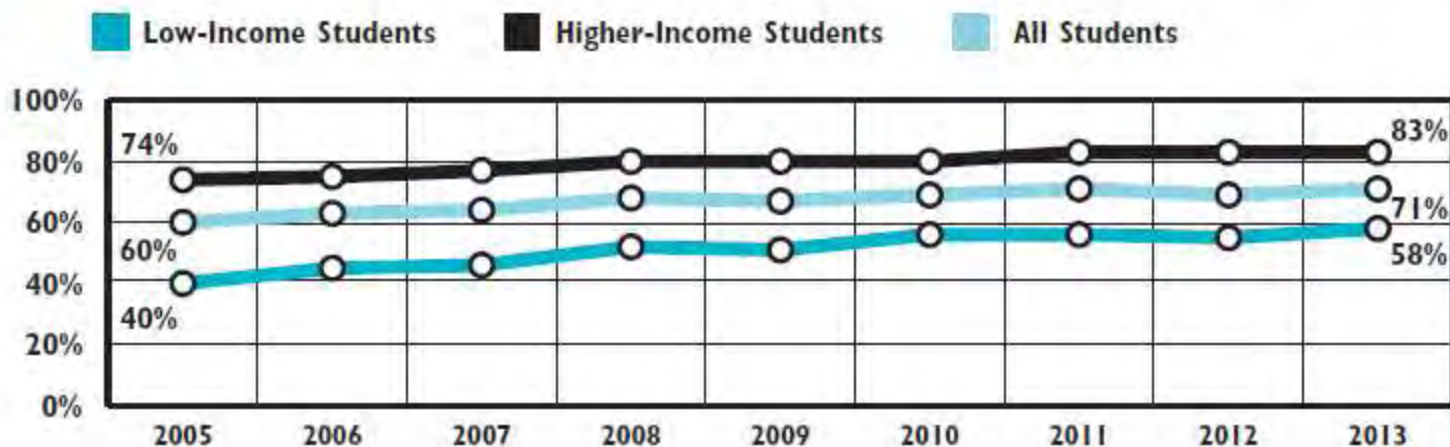
Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, October 2005–October 2013. Low-income status is determined by eligibility for the free or reduced-price lunch program.

1. Improve school readiness

2. Reduce chronic early absence

3. Increase access to high-quality summer learning programs

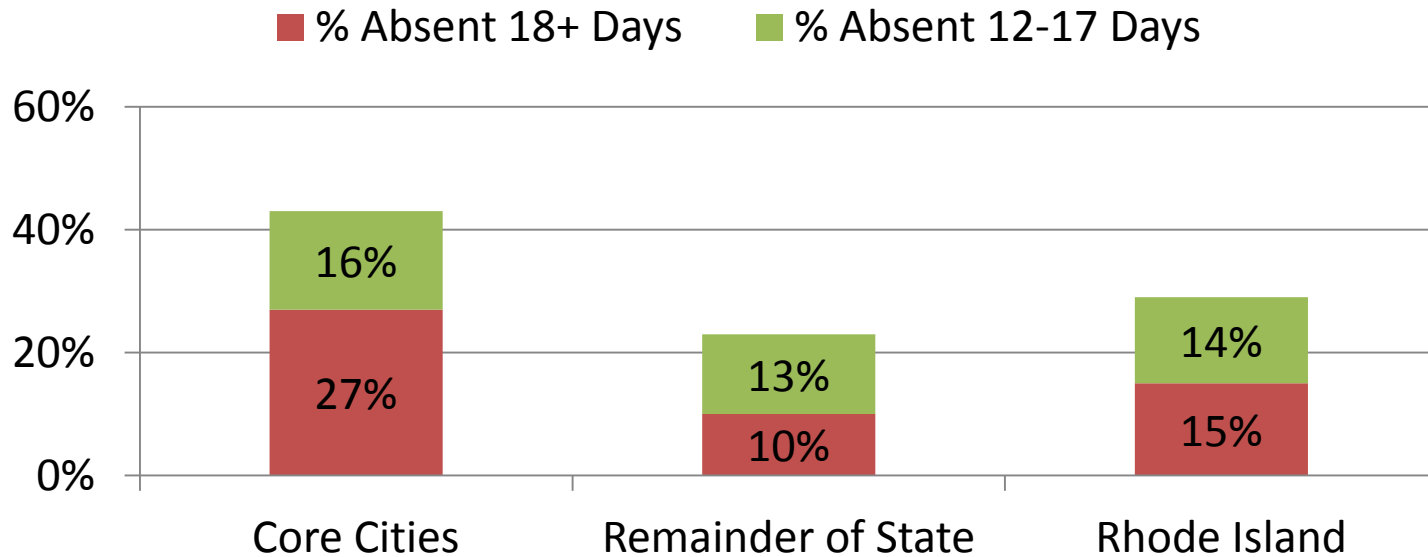4. Improve early grade reading proficiency

- Create opportunities for staff across school levels to collaborate

- Prepare students to participate in high school campus and culture before enrollment

- Ensure that all students feel connected to school

- Identify students struggling in middle school and provide timely and individualized supports

Chronic Absence in Middle School:
A Risk Factor for Dropping Out

■ % Absent 18+ Days   ■ % Absent 12-17 Days

	Core Cities	Remainder of State	Rhode Island
% Absent 12-17 Days	16%	13%	14%
% Absent 18+ Days	27%	10%	15%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013-2014 school year. Includes only students who were enrolled at least 90 days.

• Chronic absence in sixth grade is one of three early warning signs that a student is likely to drop out of high school.

Chronic Absence in High School:
A Risk Factor for Dropping Out

■ % Absent 18+ Days   ■ % Absent 12-17 Days

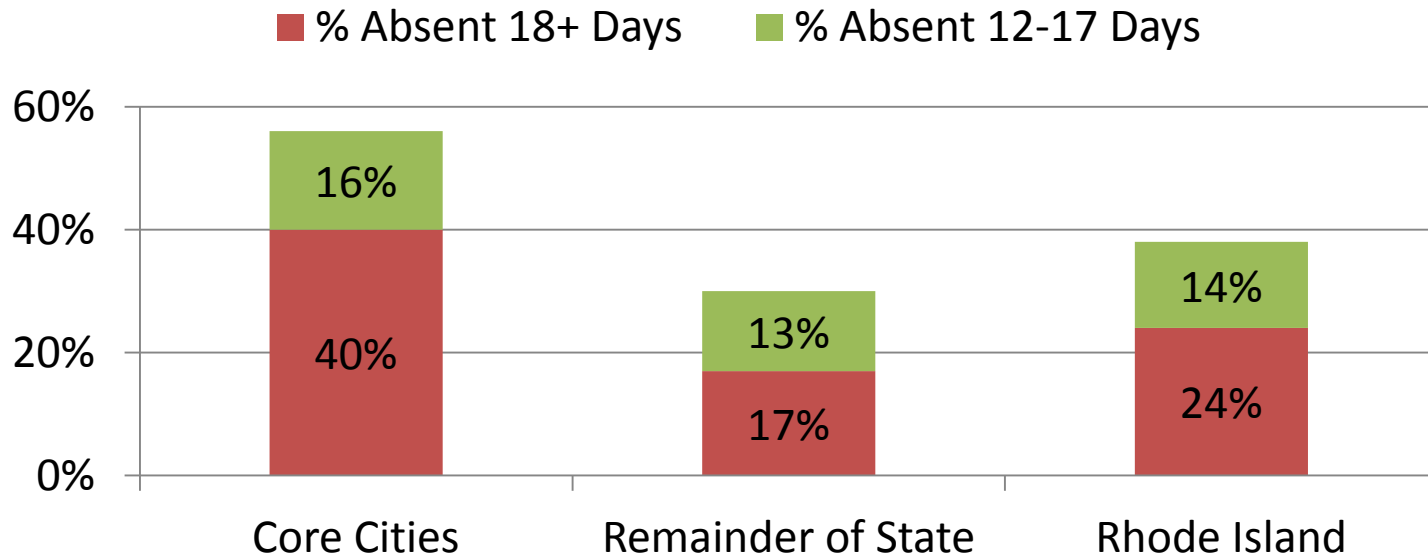|	Core Cities	Remainder of State	Rhode Island
% Absent 12-17 Days	16%	13%	14%
% Absent 18+ Days	40%	17%	24%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013-2014 school year. Includes only students who were enrolled at least 90 days.

• By ninth grade, a student's attendance is a better predictor of dropout risk than eighth-grade achievement test scores.

Reducing Chronic Absence

- ## Schools and districts can improve attendance by:
  - Developing systems to create frequent reports on absenteeism and reasons for absenteeism
  - Building and sustaining relationships with students and their families
  - Developing a community response involving adults who interact with students outside of school
  - Recognizing and rewarding good attendance
  - Committing to learning what works and building on effective efforts

- ## States can reduce chronic absence by:
  - Raising awareness about the problem
  - Producing chronic absence reports with data available by district, grade, and subgroup
  - Requiring that district and school improvement plans address chronic absence
  - Allocating resources to address barriers to attendance

School Climate and Discipline

Out-of-School Suspensions, Rhode Island Public Schools, 2013-2014

BY TYPE OF INFRACTION*	#	%	BY TYPE OF INFRACTION	#	%
Insubordination/Disrespect	4,927	31%	Alcohol/Drug/Tobacco Offenses	718	5%
Disorderly Conduct	3,290	21%	Arson/Larceny/Robbery/Vandalism	412	3%
Fighting	2,233	14%	Weapon Possession	206	1%
Assault of Student or Teacher	1,275	8%	Communications/Electronic Devices	186	1%
Obscene/Abusive Language	1,169	7%	Attendance Offenses	0	0%
Harassment/Intimidation/Threat	1,030	7%	Other Offenses	317	2%
			Total	15,763	

*Harassment offenses include hazing and hate crimes. Assault offenses include sexual assault. Examples of other offenses include cheating/plagiarism, fire regulation violations, sexual misconduct, trespassing, forgery, as well as disciplinary actions where the infraction is missing or not specified.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2013-2014 school year. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- Being suspended even once in 9th grade is associated with a two-fold increase in the likelihood of dropping out.

- **Schools and districts can improve school climate by:**
  - Setting high expectations for student behavior
  - Using tiered supports based on students' needs
  - Providing professional development focused on engaging instruction and promoting positive behavior
  - Ensuring the equitable, appropriate, and limited use of suspensions

- **States can improve school climate by:**
  - Raising awareness about the connections between suspensions and dropout
  - Raising awareness about disparities in school discipline and strategies to address these disparities
  - Promoting alternatives to out-of-school suspensions
  - Facilitating the sharing of best practices across districts

Expanded Learning Opportunities

- Provide structured learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom

- Offered through collaborations with community organizations, businesses, and universities

- Allow students to receive high school credit

- Rigorous

- Hands-on

- Individualized

- Project-based

Benefits of ELOs

- Increase student engagement

- Improve attendance

- Reduce dropout rates

- Provide stronger connections to adults and peers

- Prepare students for college and careers

- **Districts can support students who have dropped out by:**
  - Using a case management model to reengage students who have dropped out and address barriers to high school completion
  - Offering individualized and flexible academic programs
  - Focusing on students' career goals
  - Partnering with community organizations to address students' needs
- **States can support dropout recovery by:**
  - Clarifying state law regarding the ability of districts to re-enroll and serve students over age 18
  - Exploring how the funding formula can support the cost of educating students returning to high school after dropping out
  - Facilitating the sharing of best practices across districts

Recommendations

- Raise awareness about the importance of high school graduation for individuals and our state economy
- Increase access to high-quality early childhood programs
- Ensure that all children read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade
- Establish early warning systems
- Help students transition from middle school to high school
- Provide multiple pathways to graduation
- Ensure that school leaders have high expectations for all

- Focus on closing achievement gaps
- Ensure that all students have effective teachers
- Offer students a rigorous and engaging curriculum
- Reduce chronic absence at all school levels
- Improve the school climate
- Improve communications with parents
- Develop and nurture partnerships
- Share best practices

Contact Information

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  Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

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