

## Community Priority

# Education and Student Success

Together, we're improving education outcomes

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We're committed to strengthening student experiences, educator support, and collaborative efforts to address inequities and set all Rhode Islanders up for educational success.

Through deep engagement and discussion with the public, collaboration with our partners, research, and data analysis, we identified a set of community priorities that are essential for a thriving Rhode Island - **Civic and Cultural Life, Climate Action and Sustainability, Education and Student Success, Healthy and Strong Communities, and Housing and Economic Mobility.**

These priorities were consistently voiced by the community we serve and will guide our efforts in the years ahead. As the state's community foundation, we will continue to address Rhode Island's most pressing needs and advance promising solutions, with an eye for equity and a heart for all.

A thriving state depends on a public education system working equitably and urgently to prepare all students to succeed in life and access pathways to opportunity.

## Focus areas

- Strengthening educator capacity, including efforts to support an inclusive teacher workforce by expanding recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Improving student learning experiences (prioritizing middle, high school, and high-needs populations), focused on youth development and increasing out-of-school support for students in underserved communities.
- Collaborating on policy, procedure, and use of resources at the state and local level, particularly centering on revisions to the school funding formula, multilingual student supports, creating relevant student opportunities, and addressing workforce challenges.
- Innovative, collaborative initiatives beyond the stated focus areas with the potential to drive greater impact on education and student success – particularly those that address inequities and/or advance solutions across multiple community priorities.

# Case Studies

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## Rhode Island Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs

For over a century, Boys & Girls Clubs in Rhode Island have provided critical academic support and out-of-school opportunities to youth, particularly those from under-resourced communities. The 30 club sites across Rhode Island serve over 20,000 young people annually with programming focused on academic success, character and leadership, healthy lifestyles, and the arts.

A cornerstone of this work is Power Hour, an afterschool program for youth ages 5 to 18 that provides homework assistance, tutoring, and learning activities designed to develop self-directed learners. Last year alone, the program served 1,440 young people across clubs in East Providence, Newport, Northern Rhode Island, Pawtucket, Providence, and Warwick.

"Our Power Hour program is more than just homework help; it is a structured learning environment designed to bridge opportunity gaps, reinforce classroom learning and equip middle and high school students with the skills to become independent learners," said Erin Gilliatt, executive director of the East Providence Boys & Girls Clubs and Alliance leader.

The Rhode Island Foundation's \$100,000 investment in Power Hour reflects a commitment to extending educational reach beyond the classroom, ensuring students across the state stay engaged, confident, and on track for graduation.

## Project Goal

Project GOAL's (Greater Opportunity for Athletes to Learn) mission is to provide a free coeducational program affording every student the opportunity for educational support while being part of a sports team, regardless of financial constraints, cultural background, language barriers, or lack of transportation. The program serves students ages 9 to 14.

Running several days per week after school for three hours, the first half of the programming is dedicated to small-group schoolwork and tutoring time led by certified teachers, and the second half is focused on soccer and other athletic programming. Project GOAL works collaboratively with students, families, and teachers to set goals for academic and behavioral growth, with regular monitoring of progress.

With support from the Rhode Island Foundation, Project GOAL is expanding significantly—from serving 180 students annually to 250—and extending its reach beyond Central Falls and Providence to include students in Pawtucket and Woonsocket. This growth enables more young people across Rhode Island to access the combination of academic support and athletic opportunities that helps them thrive both in the classroom and on the field.