

VITAL SIGNS

RHODE ISLAND

Business leaders in Rhode Island cannot find the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) talent they need to stay competitive. Students' lagging performance in K-12 is a critical reason why. The good news is that the nation's most effective STEM education programs can help turn the tide.

Rhode Island students have made real progress in math since 2003, yet not enough students--least of all minorities--have the chance to learn challenging content to prepare them for college and careers. There is special cause for concern in science: Girls lag behind boys, most 8th graders don't have any teachers with a major in science, and science teachers say they don't have the resources they need.

RHODE ISLAND NEEDS MORE STEM TALENT

STEM fields are growing in Rhode Island

Between 2017 and 2027:

STEM jobs will grow

Non-STEM jobs will grow

9%

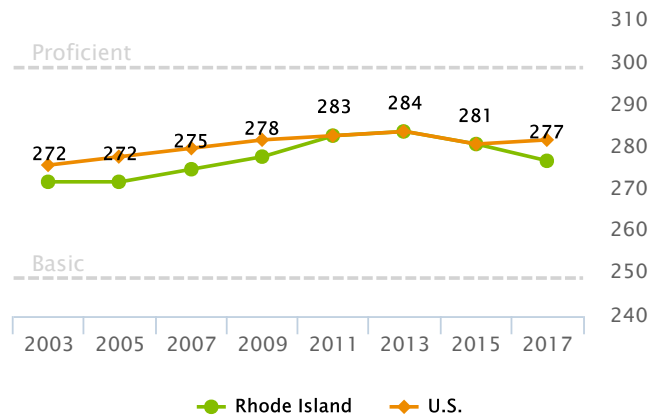
5%

THE RHODE ISLAND STEM SKILLS SHORTAGE STARTS EARLY

The state has made progress in math

After years of progress, Rhode Island students have lost ground.

Trends in 8th grade math scores, 2003-2017

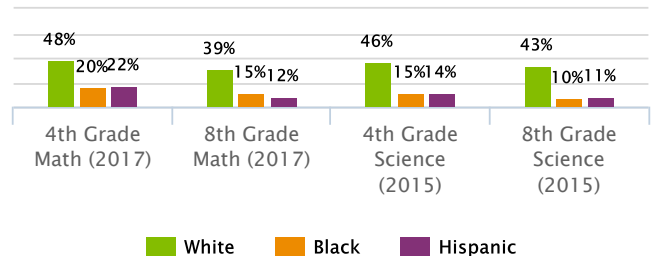


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2003-2017

Students of color lag farthest behind

Closing achievement gaps must remain a priority.

Percentage of Rhode Island students at or above proficient, by race/ethnicity



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015-2017

*Data not available or reporting requirements not met.

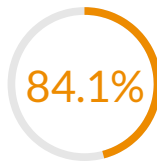
The state must plug the gaps in the STEM pipeline

The Rhode Island STEM pipeline loses young people at every level of the education system. Low graduation rates from college narrow the pipeline of students who can gain advanced STEM skills. The 2-year college graduation rate is particularly low. Of those students who do graduate, few get a post-secondary degree in STEM.

What percentage of high school students graduate? (2014-2015)



Rhode Island

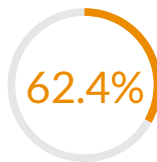


United States

Of high school graduates who enter a 4-year degree program, what percentage graduate? (2012-2013)



Rhode Island

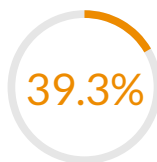


United States

Of high school graduates who enter a 2-year associate's degrees program, what percentage graduate? (2012-2013)



Rhode Island

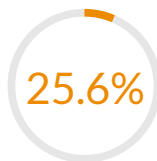


United States

What percentage of certificates and degrees is in STEM fields? (2014-2015)



Rhode Island



United States

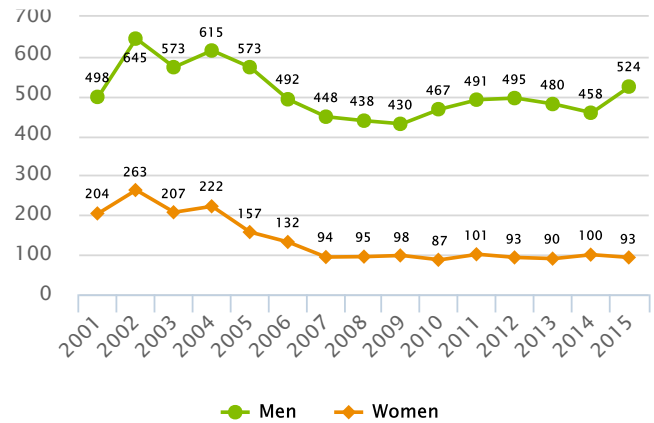
TAP RHODE ISLAND'S FEMALE AND MINORITY TALENT

Together, females and minorities make up more than half of Rhode Island's population, yet they are much less likely to earn STEM degrees or become STEM professionals. Closing these gaps can pay big dividends in the state.

Women have lost ground in computing

The available talent in computer science would rise dramatically if the state simply closed the gender gap in these subjects.

Number of computing degrees/certificates in Rhode Island

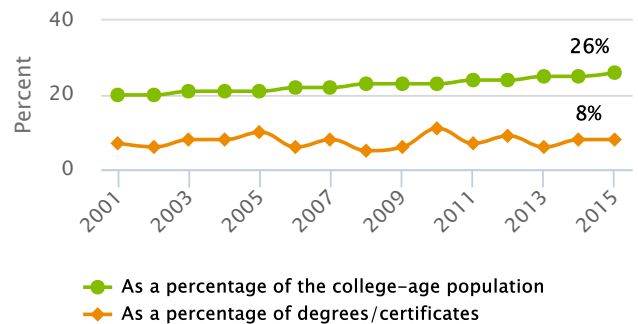


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2001-2015

People of color are not gaining ground in engineering degrees

It is critical to prepare and inspire many more students of color to pursue STEM subjects such as computer science and engineering.

Underrepresented minorities in Rhode Island earning engineering degrees/certificates



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2001-2015

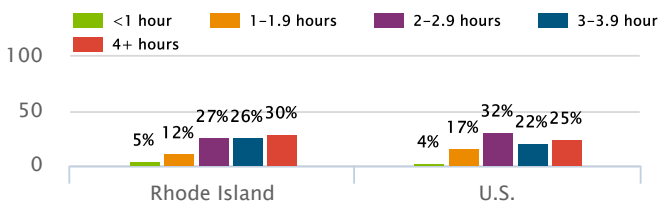
*Data not available or reporting requirements not met.

GIVE RHODE ISLAND STUDENTS ACCESS TO BETTER STEM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of access to such opportunities severely limits young people's college and career prospects.

The state should make time for elementary science

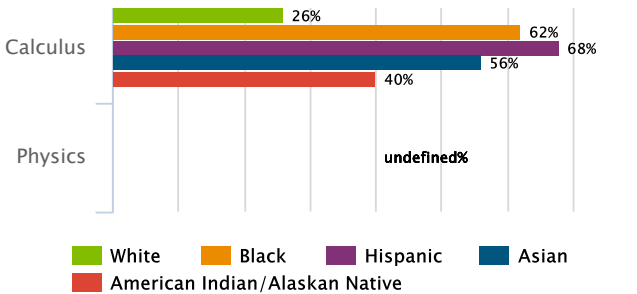
Hours per week spent on science, grades 1-4, 2015



The state should improve access to advanced courses

Many students lack access to such courses.

Students in Rhode Island high schools that do not offer challenging math and science courses, 2013/14



Success in Advanced Placement courses can put more students on a path to STEM careers.

Of the high school graduating class of 2015 in Rhode Island:

	Took AP Math Exam	Scored 3+ on AP Math Exam
All Students	9%	5%
White	10%	6%
Black	6%	2%
Hispanic	5%	2%
Asian	23%	12%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6%	4%

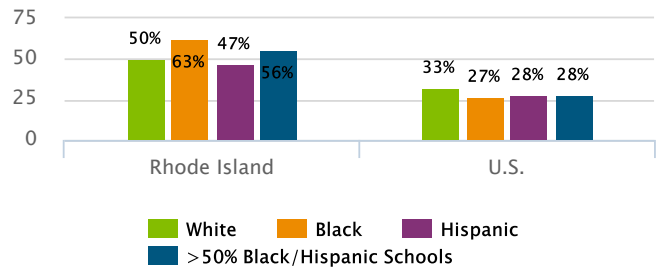


DEVELOP AND RETAIN TALENTED STEM TEACHERS IN RHODE ISLAND

Research shows that teachers' content knowledge and teaching experience can affect student performance

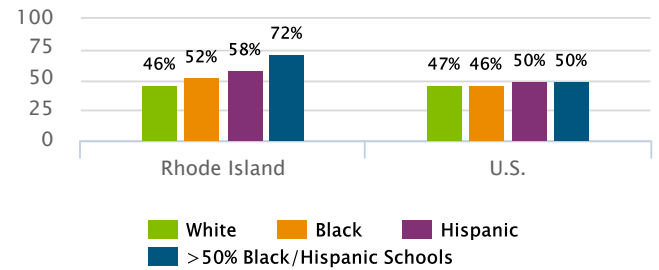
Boost teachers' content knowledge

Eighth-graders whose math teachers have an undergraduate major in math, 2017



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education 2017

Eighth-graders whose science teachers have an undergraduate major in science, 2015

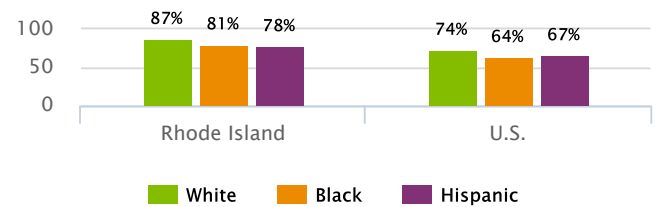


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education 2015

Retain excellent teachers

Research shows that new teachers are less effective than teachers with three to five years of experience.

Eighth-graders whose math teachers have 6+ years of experience teaching their subject



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education 2017

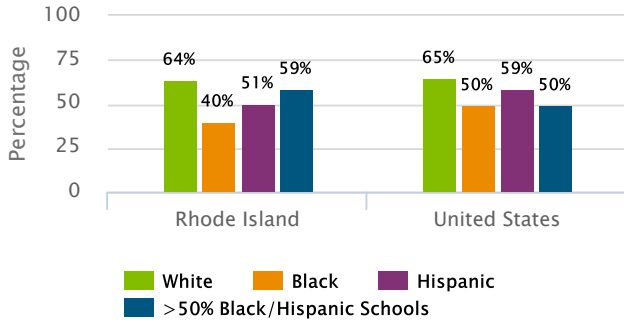
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GIVE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

Teachers in Rhode Island need better resources and teaching materials to succeed.

Too many teachers lack the tools of their trade

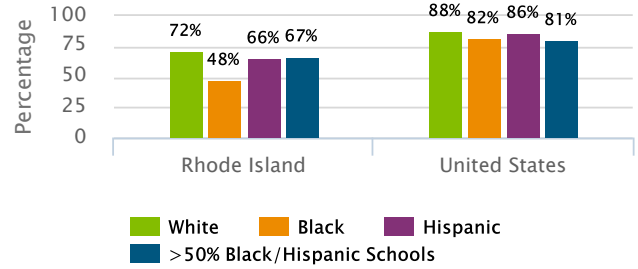
Eighth-graders whose science teachers say they have all or most of the resources they need, 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015

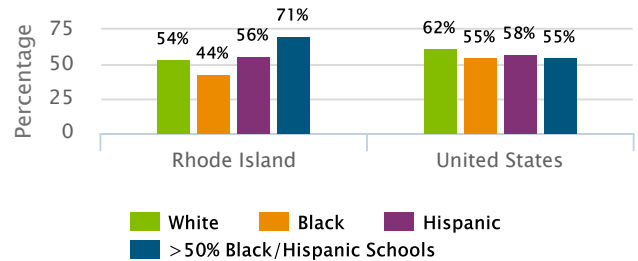
The state should improve access to science facilities and supplies

Eighth-graders whose schools have science labs, 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015

Eighth-graders whose schools report that supplies or materials for science labs are available "to a large extent," 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, 2015

*Data not available or reporting requirements not met.

For the complete state report, methodology, and sources, see vitalsigns.ecs.org (vitalsigns.ecs.org)

Education Commission of the States serves as a partner to state policymakers by providing personalized support and helping education leaders come together and learn from one another. Through our programs and services, policymakers gain the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy.



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