

# **Executive Summary: Supportive Policy Conditions to Foster Student-Centered Learning in Rhode Island**

*Prepared by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT*

## **What is student-centered learning?**

Student-centered learning (SCL) incorporates students' skills and interests into the learning process and engages students in their own success. The Nellie Mae Education Foundation highlights four key tenets of student-centered learning:

- Learning that is personalized
- Learning that is competency-based
- Learning that happens anytime, anywhere
- Learning that allows students to take ownership

For more information, we recommend the following video: <https://youtu.be/e6ieXLVCss4>

## **Why is student-centered learning important?**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT strongly believes that embracing student-centered learning is one of the keys to increasing Rhode Island's high school graduation rate, closing achievement gaps, and ensuring that more students are ready for success in college, careers, and life.

## **What is Rhode Island already doing to foster student-centered learning?**

Rhode Island already has many policies in place that support student-centered learning, including Secondary School Regulations that include multiple measures for students to demonstrate proficiency and graduation readiness and a requirement that all students in grades 6-12 have individual learning plans. Rhode Island's new five-year strategic plan for PK-12 and adult education includes personalized learning as one of six priority areas, highlighting how student-centered learning is increasingly being seen as central to meeting Rhode Island's education goals.

## **How can Rhode Island do more to support student-centered learning?**

Districts and schools across Rhode Island are using student-centered learning practices, including blended learning, expanded learning opportunities for high school credit, and creative and effective performance-based assessments. However, in order to move from small pockets of innovation to statewide implementation, we need to do more. As a state, we need to examine current regulations and determine how they can be clarified, enhanced, or amended to more clearly support the use of student-centered learning practices. We also need to look at how we can build on the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) strategic plan to make changes at the state, district, and community levels to support student-centered learning.

## **Who will be involved?**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has been awarded a grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation to work at the state level, advocating for high-leverage policies to support student-centered learning. As part of this work, we will convene a Leadership Table of key stakeholders to share expertise and identify strategies for scaling up student-centered learning practices statewide. Members of this Leadership Table will include representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Governor's office, and the General Assembly, as well as superintendents, principals, teachers, students, and community leaders.

The Student-Centered Learning Leadership Table will look at best practices in Rhode Island and across the nation and make recommendations for how we can clarify, strengthen and amend state regulations to support broader implementation of effective student-centered learning practices in Rhode Island.