

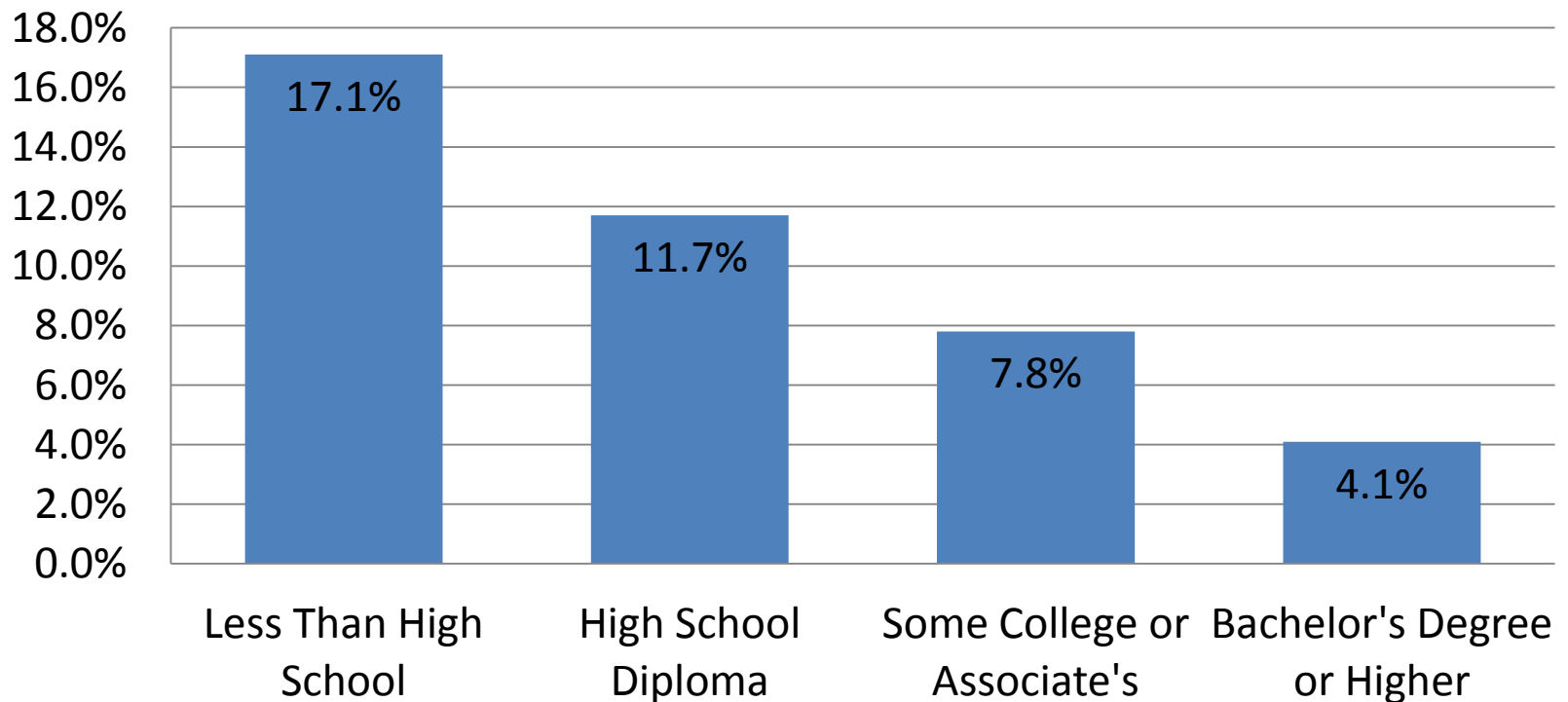
Data Highlights and Promising Practices for Improving the High School Graduation Rate



**Policy Roundtable
March 23, 2015**

#GradRI

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

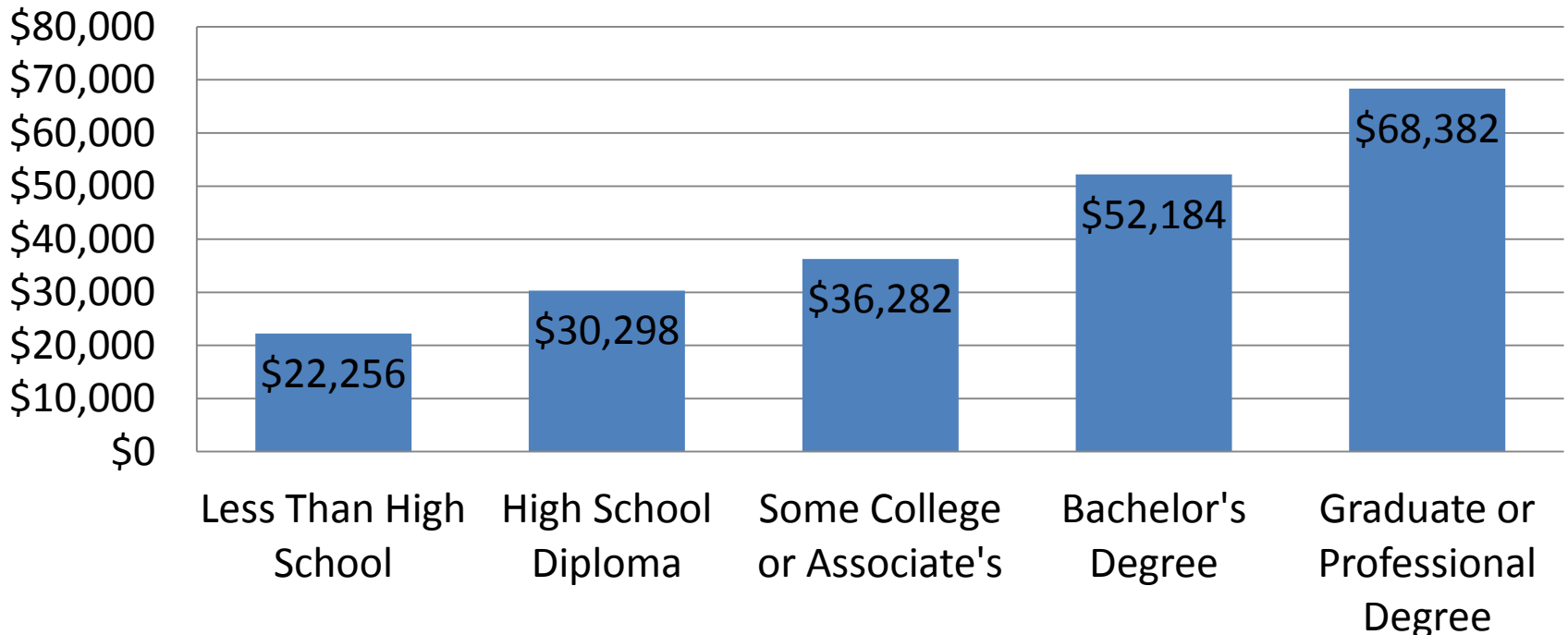


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2013, Table S2301.



Education: The Key to Economic Opportunity

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



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2013, Table B20004

How Rhode Island Ranks

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

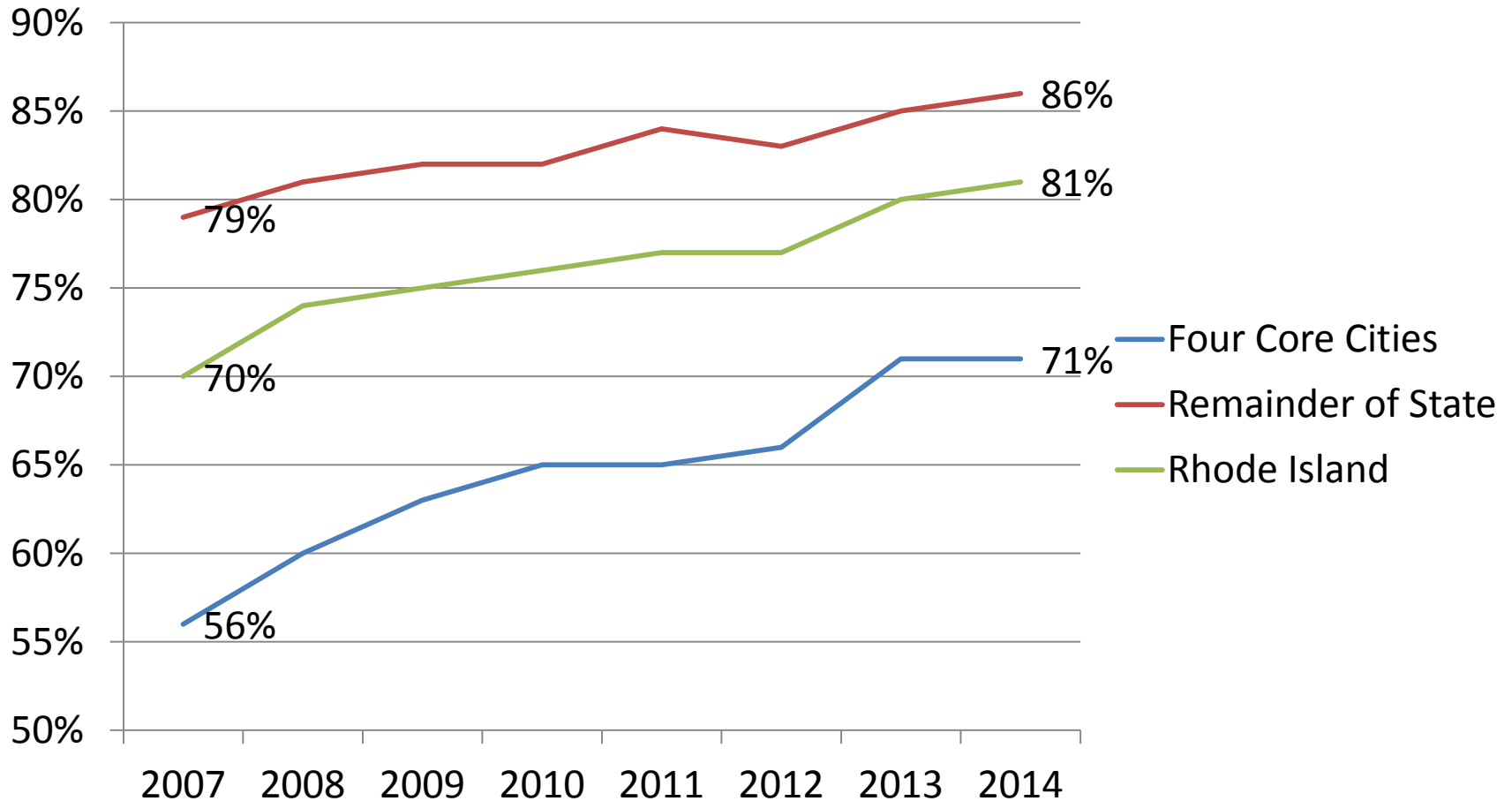
**1st is best; 49th is worst*

***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% |

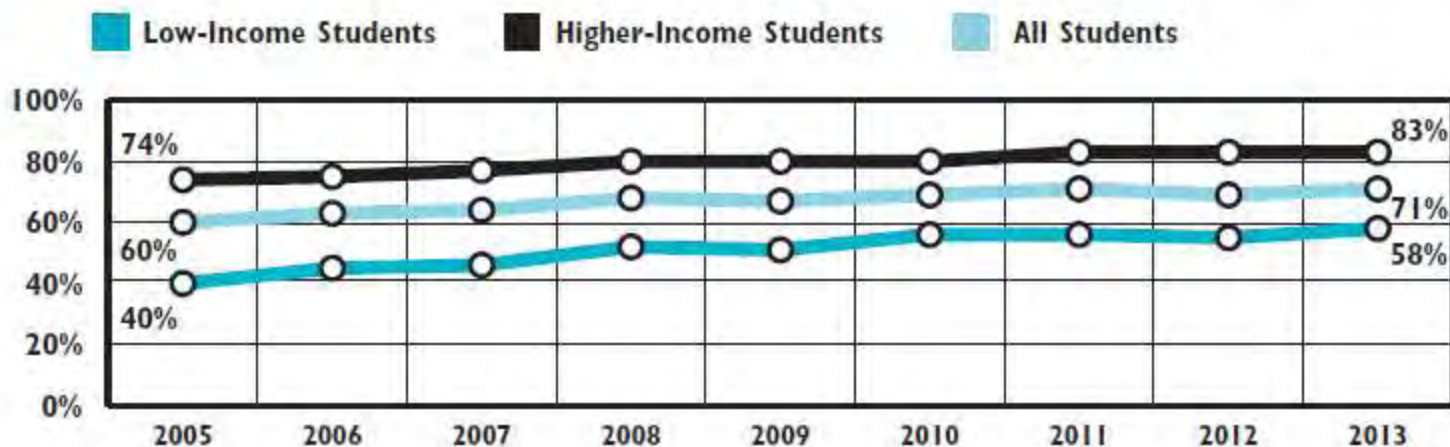
Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2014. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Early Warning Signs

- 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

Importance of Reading by the End of Third Grade

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



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.



Improving Third-Grade Reading Skills: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

1. Improve school readiness
2. Reduce chronic early absence
3. Increase access to high-quality summer learning programs
4. Improve early grade reading proficiency

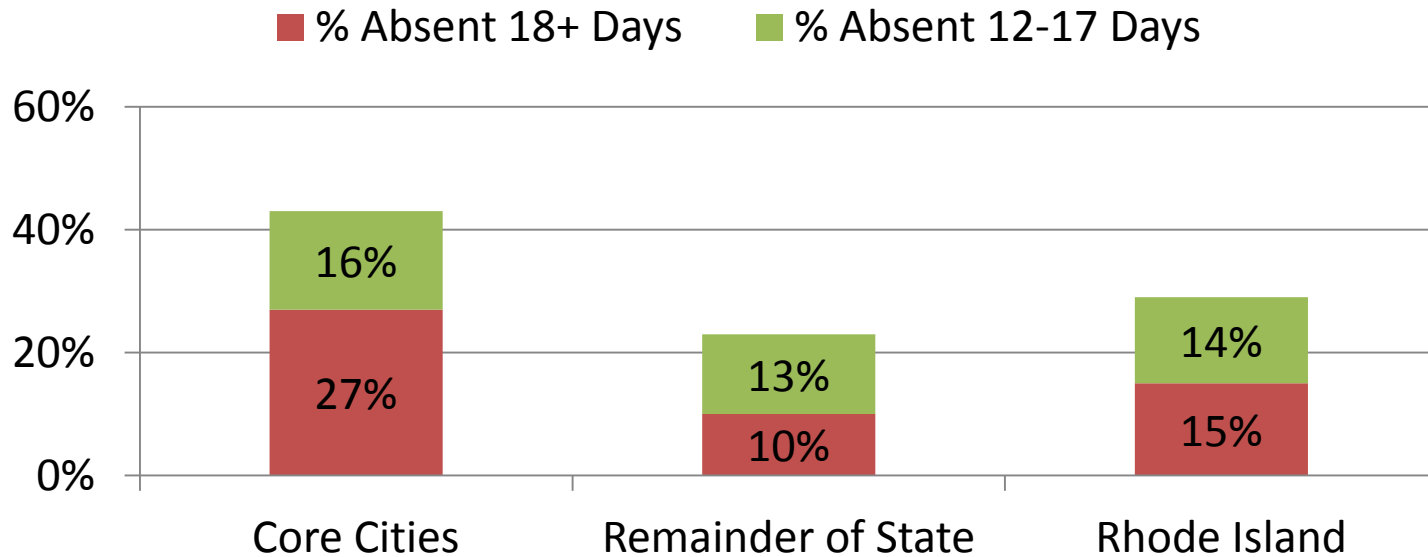


Supporting Transition from Middle School to High School

- 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

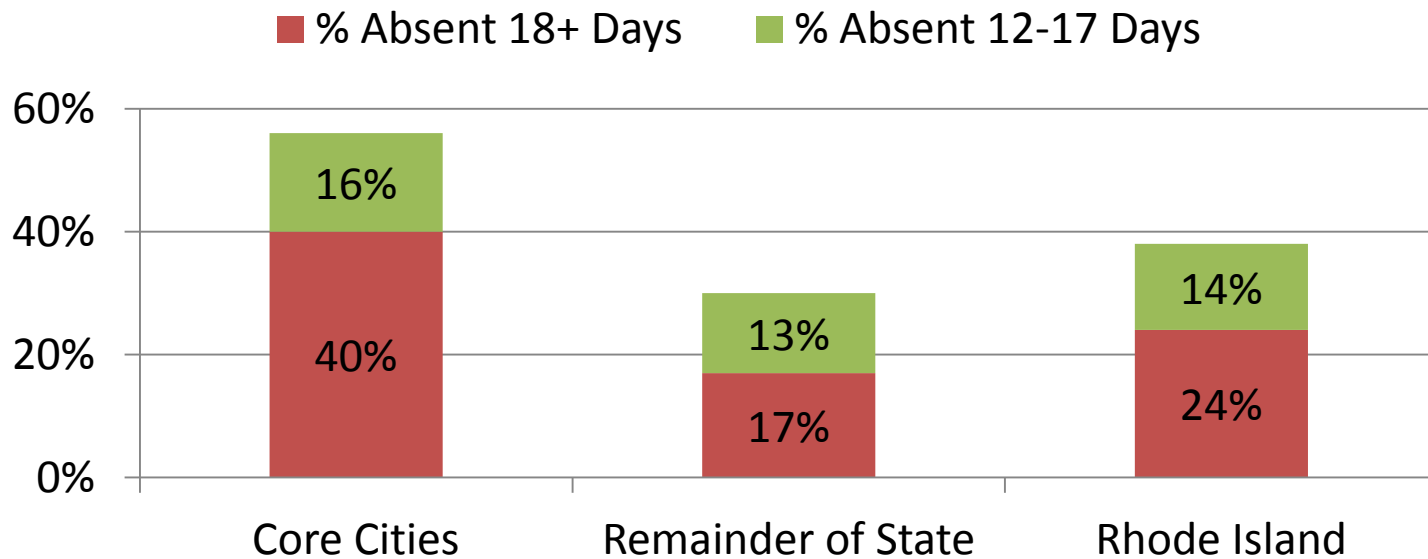


Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013-2014 school year. Includes only students who were enrolled at least 90 days.

- 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



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.



Improving School Climate

- **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

Dropout Recovery Strategies

- **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



Recommendations (Cont.)

- 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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