

## Rhode Island School Building Taskforce Summary of Principles and Goals

**Overriding Goal: Produce an actionable and equitable plan to make all Rhode Island schools warm, safe, and dry as quickly as possible and equip every school with the resources to prepare students for success in the 21st century.**

### **Principle 1: Invest More**

*Why: We must commit to investing an adequate amount of state and local resources to ensure that our schools are warm, safe, dry, and equipped to prepare the next generation for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

*How:*

- *Both the state and municipalities will need to prioritize school facilities in their capital planning and budgeting in the coming years*
- *Move quickly, because there is a cost to inaction*
- *Invest state resources in a way that leaves every district/community better off and does not penalize those districts/communities that have made a strong effort to invest in their facilities*
- *Hold this year's projects harmless from any policy changes*
  - o *State share of this year's applications for new projects cannot be reduced*
  - o *Any increases in state share can be applied to this year's applications for new projects*

### **Principle 2: Invest Smarter**

*Why: We need to ensure that spending occurs where it is most needed to meet our overriding goal of providing all students facilities that are warm, safe, dry and prepared for 21<sup>st</sup> century learnings*

*How:*

- *Incentivize early projects that address priority 1 & 2 concerns*
- *Incentivize projects that maximize targeted STEAM upgrades*
- *Pursue replacement and/or consolidation of buildings (newer and fewer) in cases where these options are financially and programmatically preferable to maintaining the status quo*
- *Continue the use of district master planning*

### **Principle 3: Invest Efficiently**

*Why: Currently, a disproportionate share of state and municipal school facilities financing pays for interest on municipal debt, and there are few requirements in place to ensure that project costs are held to reasonable levels.*

*How:*

- *Develop strategies to lower the cost of municipal borrowing*
- *Expand paygo funding to reduce amount of state money going to pay for interest on municipal debt*
- *Invest in cost-saving energy efficiency projects*
- *Explore the introduction of “maintenance of effort” requirements to ensure that buildings are maintained at a high condition level after they are constructed / repaired.*
- *Explore establishing statewide support systems to help school districts manage construction costs such as assistance with project management, long term capital asset planning, and the introduction of master purchase agreements.*
- *Streamline the process by which school construction projects are approved*