

Report to the Sherlock Center Vision Services Joint Task Force

Presentation from the Rhode Island Department of Education

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Historical Context

Rhode Island Vision Education and Services Program (RIVESP) was created by legislation in 2006, and provides:

- vision assessment, direct instruction and consultation with classroom teachers and families
- includes vision instruction/support as well as orientation and mobility services
 - Certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs)
 - Orientation and Mobility Specialist (O&M)

Supporting Statewide System

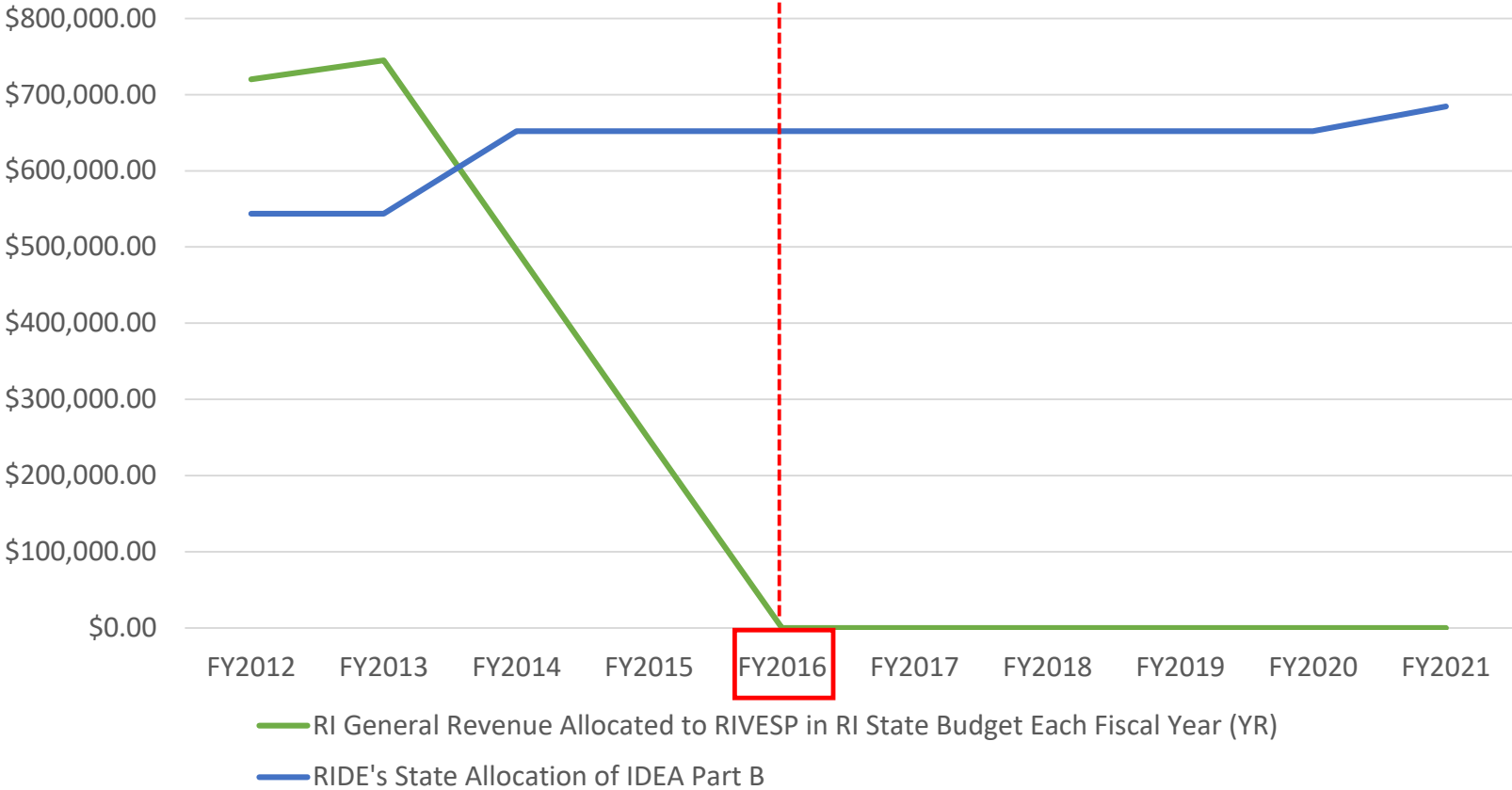
- Since inception, RIVESP has been financially supported in part through a contract with RIDE utilizing
 - State General Revenue
 - Fee-For-Service from Local Education Agencies (LEAs)
- In addition, IDEA Part B State Discretionary Funds
 - Typically used for statewide capacity building; RIDE as the state agency chose to use it specifically for this purpose
 - This is **the only program** for direct services to children that RIDE subsidizes, since 2006
- The five-year Sherlock Center contract was scheduled to end in 2020
 - Due to the significant concern for consistency of services for the students, and the financial concerns raised by the program, RIDE:
 - extended contract under state procurement rules to 2021, and
 - voluntarily increased IDEA Funding by 5%
 - Current funding level from RIDE \$684,600 (**all** IDEA Part B funds) **all** allocated to the Sherlock Center

2020-2025 RIVESP Agreement

- New expectations
 - Educator evaluation
 - Data reporting
- Term of agreement is for five years
- IDEA Part B was committed for the term of the agreement

RI General Revenue Support

RI General Revenue Allocated to RIVESP in RI State Budget Each Fiscal Year (FY)



Program Review in 2019-2020

- With the Sherlock Center's new leadership and in anticipation of a new contract, RIDE engaged in a program review in November of 2019
 - The general findings were:
 - Since 2015, district participation in the Sherlock Center's program declined
 - Some LEAs hired their own vision teachers
 - Some LEAs were using a different vendor
 - Program costs continued to increase
 - Staffing levels, operating costs, and contractual obligations

Medicaid Eligibility in 2020

- In an effort to find other ways to maintain services for the students, provide revenue for the Sherlock Center and the non-participating LEAs, RIDE worked with the EOHHS to add allowable reimbursement (codes) for vision services as Medicaid reimbursable services
 - Allows LEAs to seek Medicaid reimbursement for eligible students
 - Intended to reduce the fiscal burden on LEAs
 - Bolster the funding for the Sherlock Center
- This was implemented with LEAs in November 2020

Program Participation – *Districts with Employed TVI*

District	Students TVI	Students O&M
Coventry (1 TVI)	16	0
Cranston (1 TVI)	24	6
Providence (2 TVI)	51	10
East Providence (1 TVI, began 2021 SY)	8	4

Total Students Served: 99

Program Participation – *Districts Utilizing Another Vendor*

District	Students TVI	Students O&M
Newport	1	1
West Warwick	3	1

Total Students Served: 4

Sherlock Center RI Vision Education & Services Program

- **School Districts:** Barrington, Bristol-Warren, Burrillville, Central Falls, Chariho, Coventry, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Glocester, Highlander Charter School, Jamestown, Johnston, Lincoln, Narragansett, Newport County, North Kingstown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Warwick, Westerly, Woonsocket
- **Staffing:**
 - 10 Teachers of Students with Vision Impairments (TVI)
 - 3 FTE, 1 part time (1 day per week) Certified Orientation Mobility Specialists (OM)
- **Current Enrollment:**
 - 60 students, Vision Services Only
 - 8 students, Orientation Mobility Services Only
 - 60 students, Joint Services
 - 128 Total Students
 - 15 Evaluations in Progress

School Year	Number of Students Served	Number of Service hours	Number of Providers
2021-2022	128	6904	13.2
2020-2021	138	6772.5	13.5
2019-2020	136	7444	13.5
2018-2019	132	7220	13.5
2017-2018	128	8557	15.5
2016-2017	149	8606	15.5
2015-2016	137	7780	15.5



State Student Service Totals

231 students receiving services

- 99 in LEAs with their own TVI – 43%
- 4 in LEAs using another vendor – 2%
- 128 in LEAs using the Sherlock Center – 55%

*Not
receiving
any IDEA
Part B
dollars*