

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, May 13, 2016

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. R.I. [Pre-kindergarten Program](#) adds 12 sites; applications being accepted for coming school year
2. RIDE affirms [dual, concurrent enrollment](#) courses must be accessible to all
3. RIDE provides information and examples about RI proposed [empowerment model](#)
4. RIDE posts slideshow: What they're saying about funds for education of [English learners](#)
5. Exeter-West Greenwich student receives national [essay award](#)
6. Students, teachers honored for [computer-related achievements](#)
7. Students, teachers receive awards for [civics](#) projects
8. Middle-school students receive [scholar-leader awards](#)
9. Providence school leader named Outstanding [First-Year Principal](#)
10. East Providence educator named [School Nurse Teacher](#) of the Year

11. *Reminder:* Teachers and all friends of education invited to open-line community [conference call](#) **May 23**
12. *Reminder:* Some student-information systems may have incorrect data on parent [home language](#)
13. Charlestown school competing for \$50,000 [technology grant](#)

From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE)

Instruction:

14. RIDE seeks input from educators on National Core [Arts Standards](#); survey closes **June 10**
15. RIDE seeks proposals for presentations at [technology conference](#); deadline, **June 1**

Assessments:

16. RIDE schedules summer workshops on understanding PARCC [ELA/Literacy](#) expectations

Data Collection:

17. *Reminder:* [Roster Verification](#) to due **May 23**
18. *Reminder:* [Non-Certified Staff](#) reports due **May 26**
19. *Reminder:* Several data collections are [open or due](#) in the next few months

Educators:

20. **Reminder:** RIDE seeking nominations for 2016-17 [District Teacher of the Year](#) by **May 27**

From the U.S. Department of Education

21. USED announces competition for \$65 million in grants for [charter schools](#)

From other organizations

22. **Reminder:** Highlander Institute seeks educators for 3rd cohort of [Fuse RI Fellows](#); deadline is **Monday** (May 16)
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Action Item Calendar

Monday (May 16): [Preliminary Coordinated Early Intervening Services - Due](#)

Tuesday (May 17): [Special Education Census – Due](#)

Tuesday (May 17): [Special Education Census Reporting - Due](#)

May 23: [Roster Verification Principal Review \(Stage 1\) – Closes](#)

May 24: [Special Ed Census, Duplicate Resolution - Due](#)

May 24: [Special Ed Census Reporting, Duplicate Resolution - Due](#)

June 2: [Reporting Student Contacts - Due](#)

June 3: [Annual School Health Report - Due](#)

June 6: [Preliminary Program Core Data - Due](#)

June 6: [Roster Verification Teacher Review \(Stage 2\) – Closes](#)

June 20 – Reports on [interventions](#) due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. R.I. Pre-kindergarten Program adds 12 sites; applications being accepted for coming school year

We are pleased to be adding 12 sites this fall to the Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program, bringing the total number of sites to 29 and making the 2016-17 pre-kindergarten program the largest ever.

Pending approval of Governor Raimondo's budget and thanks to the federal Preschool Expansion Grant that Rhode Island received from the U.S. Department of Education, pre-kindergarten programs will be located this fall in 11 communities: Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

We know that it's never too early to start a child's education, and our continued investments in the Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program will give hundreds of Rhode Island families a jump start on learning for their children. Early-childhood education is one of the priorities in our Strategic Plan, so we are pleased that this fall there will be a total of 29 sites offering free pre-kindergarten programs. We hope that many Rhode Island parents and guardians will take advantage of this opportunity and apply for a spot for their children in one of our high-quality programs.

We have released the 2016-17 Pre-Kindergarten Program child lottery application and opened the online Pre-Kindergarten Program child lottery application system. Families will be able to apply online at <https://www3.ride.ri.gov/PKLottery> or family members may pick up an application at either the pre-kindergarten program location or at the district location when so noted above. Families can also download the application, at www.ride.ri.gov/EC-Programs-PreK. Completed applications should be returned to the program of choice. Families may apply at more than one site if multiple sites exist in their community of residence, but only one application per site will be accepted. Applications will be accepted through **July 1**.

We have posted our news release on the pre-kindergarten program here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/AdditionalInformation/News/ViewArticle/tabid/408/ArticleId/323/R-I-Pre-kindergarten-Program-set-to-open-more-classrooms-increase-access-for-families.aspx>.

2. RIDE affirms dual, concurrent enrollment courses must be accessible to all

General Counsel David V. Abbott has sent this letter on dual enrollment to Veronika Kot, of Rhode Island Legal Services:

Thank you for your letter of March 23, 2016, in which you bring to RIDE's attention several concerns that you have regarding the anticipated second school-year offerings of concurrent and dual enrollment courses in Rhode Island. We share your excitement at the promising opportunities these courses, as well as more traditional Advanced Placement

courses, present for all students. You and RIDE are also both focused on ensuring that these opportunities will be accessible to all qualified students, including those from families with low incomes and those traditionally underrepresented in advanced high school coursework.

After many months of communications, there should be no misconceptions about the responsibility for payment of the tuition and fees associated with dual and concurrent enrollment as the program is unfolding for school year 2016-17 (as you indicate in your letter). However, Commissioner Wagner has indicated to me that [through inclusion of this letter] he will address this issue in his next weekly “field memo,” which goes out each week to superintendents, principals, and other members of the education community. As you may know, last year and again this year (for FY 2017), funding is included in the state budget as Governor Raimondo’s Prepare RI Dual Enrollment Fund. We are hopeful that this funding will again be available to meet the costs of tuition and fees for the successful enrollment of eligible public high-school students in dual and concurrent enrollment programming.

If, for some reason, this funding should not be available to meet the costs of programming offered in the 2016-17 school year, district policies on dual enrollment are required to have a description of the specific funding support that is available for low-income students. In addition, the Board of Education Regulations for Dual Enrollment specifically provide in Section 4.2 that no low-income student shall be denied access to dual or concurrent enrollment coursework based on their inability to pay course-related tuition and fees. RIDE’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Dual

Enrollment are quite clear that if a student is taking dual or concurrent enrollment programming as a part of required high-school coursework, the school or LEA is responsible for providing books to the student and this should be explicit in the local policy.

I appreciate your vigilance and your dedication to making sure that there are no miscommunications on these very important issues. It is vitally important to get the message out there this programming is for the benefit of *all* Rhode Island students. Should you become aware that any LEA or school is not clearly and comprehensively describing the availability of dual and concurrent enrollment coursework (or traditional AP courses), as the funding associated therewith, please contact me directly.

3. RIDE provides information and examples about proposed RI empowerment model

We have drafted a document comparing Rhode Island's proposed Empowerment Schools to the Massachusetts' Innovation Schools. You can find the document on our web site at:

www.ride.ri.gov/Empowerment

4. RIDE posts slideshow: What they're saying about funds for education of English learners

To build awareness of key education initiatives that are included in Governor Raimondo's budget – in particular, funding for the education of English learners – we have created a brief slideshow

that shows what people are saying about English learners and dual-language programs. We have posted this minute-long slideshow on our Facebook page (Rhode Island Department of Education – RIDE), and we have shared it on Twitter (@RIDeptED). Please feel free to retweet, share, and otherwise express your support for funding of this key initiative:

<http://media.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/StatementsOfSupport-ELLsFunding.mp4>.

5. Exeter-West Greenwich student receives national essay award

Madeline Green, of the Metcalf Elementary School, in Exeter-West Greenwich, is the national 6th-grade winner of the National Society – Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) American History Essay Contest. She is one of four national winners, and she is invited to attend the national DAR conference next month to receive her recognition. The essay title for the 2015-16 contest was: “A Colonial Family’s Reaction to the Stamp Act.” Congratulations to Madeline on receiving this national award!

6. Students, teachers honored for computer-related achievements

As part of an effort to encourage more young women to choose careers in technology, the [National Center for Women & Information Technology](#) (NCWIT) and its Rhode Island affiliates, [Roger Williams University](#) and [Tech Collective](#), have recognized eight students and two IT educators with the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing. The [NCWIT Award for Aspirations in](#)

[Computing](#) honors young women at the high-school level for their computing-related achievements and interests. Awardees are selected for their outstanding capacity and interest in computing and technology, proven leadership ability, academic history, and plans for postsecondary education. In addition to student honorees, NCWIT recognizes educators who demonstrate passion and commitment in engaging their students in the technology fields.

Student Award Recipients :

Katelyn Costello, Scituate High School
Abigail Dedglen, South Kingstown High School
Portia Gaitskell, Lincoln School
Lydia Lee, Chariho High School
Allison Paul, Lasalle Academy
Meaghan Robert, Scituate High School
Tasia Terrell, Rogers High School (Newport)
Renee Tremblay, Mt. Hope High School (Bristol Warren)

Educator Award Recipients:

Nicholas Bousquet, Scituate High School
Michael Deslauriers, Smithfield High School

Congratulations to these award-winning students and their teachers!

7. Students, teachers receive awards for civics projects

On Monday (May 9) at the Generation Citizen “Rhode Island Civics Day” event, almost 200 middle- and high-school students from Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence presented their semester-long civics projects at the Rhode Island State House. The following classes and projects were awarded at the event:

Middle School Change Maker Award: Slater Jr. High School (Pawtucket) project on in-school policing; teacher, Michael Lehourites

High School Change Maker Award: Juanita Sanchez Complex (Providence) project on parks and recreation; teacher, Shannon Gormely

Grassroots Change Award: Roger Williams Middle School (Providence) project on school repair; teacher, Juanita Montes de Oca

Systemic Impact Award: DelSesto Middle School (Providence) project on mental-health services; teacher, John Lancellotta

Collaboration and Diversity Award: Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy project on racism within school punishments and suspensions; teacher, Aly Chatham

Action Award: Roger Williams Middle School project on the Community Safety Act and safe policing; teacher, Tricia Webb

Open Mindedness Award: Mount Pleasant High School (Providence) project on police recruitment; teacher, Todd Creel

8. Middle-school students receive scholar-leader awards

The Rhode Island Middle Level Educators and the New England League of Middle Schools honored Middle Level Scholar Leaders at a banquet on Tuesday (May 10). The students received awards whose criteria included “demonstrating academic initiative and scholarship, providing service to classmates and school, exemplifying positive attitudes and demonstrating leadership in the classroom and school activities.” Sixty-two students from 31 schools received these honors. The keynote speakers at the

banquet were Scholar Leader Award recipients Sara Langevin, from Saint Peter School, and Natalie Aloisio, from Winman Junior High School, in Warwick. Congratulation to all of the award-winning middle-school students.

9. Providence school leader named Outstanding First-Year Principal

The Rhode Island Association of School Principals has named William Black, principal of the West Broadway Middle School, in Providence, as the Outstanding First-Year Principal of the Year. Congratulations to Principal Black on achieving this honor at the start of your career as a principal!

10. East Providence educator named School Nurse Teacher of the Year

The Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teacher Association has selected Kathleen Carrigan as the 2016 Nurse Teacher of the Year. Kathleen is the District Nursing Coordinator for the City of East Providence as well as school nurse teacher at the Kent Heights School, in East Providence. Congratulations to Kathleen on this recognition from her peers!

11. *Reminder:* Teachers and all friends of education invited to open-line community conference call May 23

We want everyone to have a chance to give us direct, personal feedback and to share ideas about what's working in our schools, so we are initiating a series of open-line community phone calls so

we can talk directly with teachers and all friends of education in Rhode Island. We have sent this message to all teachers:

Teachers have a unique perspective on education – you are the ones making it all happen. We value your insights and your feedback, and we’re always looking for new ways to continue our conversations. With that goal in mind, we have set up a series of open-line community phone calls so we can speak with one another directly on a regular basis.

The first call will take place on Monday, **May 23**:

Date: May 23

Time: 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Call-in number: (701) 801-1220

Meeting ID#: 862-142-448

No RSVP required. All Rhode Island friends of education are welcome to join. We will post more information about the call (including an agenda) on the Meeting Wall:

<https://www.startmeeting.com/wall/862-142-448>

12. *Reminder:* Some student-information systems may have incorrect data on parent home language

It has come to our attention that, during administration of the annual Special Education Survey, a small number of parents received surveys that were not in their home or native language. Upon investigation of the issue, we learned that some districts had incorrect data regarding the parent home language in their student-information systems. Should you hear from parents

asking for a copy of the survey in their native language, we suggest that you take the following steps:

Please alert your data manager so that you can confirm that you have the correct home language in your student-information system; and

Please inform parents that they can call the Resource Center at the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), at 270-0101 or (800) 464-3399. RIPIN will help parents get the survey in their preferred language and in the delivery mode most suitable for them.

Thank you for your assistance in resolving this matter.

13. Charlestown school competing for \$50,000 technology grant

The team at the Charlestown Elementary School has applied for a grant and entered a video contest through “Collaboration Nation” <<http://youtu.be/t0bljEzCkdQ>>. The school is in 1st place with 2,048 votes but needs many more votes to secure its position and potentially win up to \$50,000 for the purchase of technology for the school. The team says that Charlestown Elementary is the only Rhode Island school in the competition, and they ask if we could take a moment to vote in support of the grant application. The competition ends on **Sunday** (May 15). To vote, go to: <http://bit.ly/1WVjxzi>

From RIDE

Instruction:

14. RIDE seeks input from educators on National Core Arts Standards; survey closes June 10

RIDE is seeking feedback from educators on the potential adoption of new learning standards in the arts, specifically the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS). To that end, we are conducting a survey to collect input from educators across Rhode Island that will inform members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

All K-12 educators in the arts, including those who teach visual arts & design, dance, music, theater, and media arts, are encouraged to participate.

The deadline for completing the survey is close of business on Friday, **June 10**. Here is a link to the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCAS_RI

If you have questions about this survey, please contact Eric Park, at eric.park@ride.ri.gov or 222-4685.

15. RIDE seeks proposals for presentations at technology conference; deadline, June 1

Amplify great stories, share best and next practices, and connect with fellow educators at the 5th annual Innovation Powered by Technology Conference, to be held on Saturday, September 15.

RIDE is seeking presentation proposals to accelerate the implementation of high-quality blended and personalized

learning; best and next practices in the integration of computer science in all schools; and productive next steps for us all to take in reimagining the learning experience. This conference will deepen thinking about personalized learning, 21st-century skills, and the digital-learning transition that will prepare our students for college, careers, and life. Educators, school leaders, policy-makers, technology coordinators, coaches, and students are all encouraged to share implementation strategies, best practices, and lessons learned at the conference. The deadline for submitting presentation proposals is Wednesday, **June 1**.

For more information on this conference, visit:

<http://ride.ri.gov/conference>

Assessments:

16. RIDE schedules summer workshops on understanding PARCC ELA/Literacy expectations

RIDE will hold summer workshops for professional development regarding understanding PARCC ELA/Literacy expectations. These workshops will focus on expanding educators' understanding of the PARCC ELA/Literacy expectations by having participants complete either a literary or informational calibration exercise using PARCC released student-work samples. Please note that this calibration exercise is a repeat of the calibration exercises we offered earlier this year (January through March) as part of our workshops on understanding PARCC ELA/Literacy.

For information on dates, time, and location, see:

http://ride.ri.gov/PARCC_ELA_Workshop

Data Collection:

17. Reminder: Roster Verification to due May 23

The first stage of Roster Verification will run through May 23. During this stage, principals will review the teacher, course, and section data submitted to RIDE. The second stage of review will open May 25 and run through June 3. During this time, teachers will review their rosters and principals will monitor the status of their teachers' progress. Once this second stage is completed, principals will verify and sign off on the rosters, between June 6 and June 22. Please note that beginning this year teachers in grades 4-8 will participate in the roster-verification process (as opposed to grades 3-7 in the past).

Updated user guides for principals and teachers are available at:

[http://ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/EducatorPerformanceandSupportSystem\(EPSS\).aspx](http://ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/EducatorPerformanceandSupportSystem(EPSS).aspx).

In preparation for this year's roster-verification process, please ensure that all principals are familiar with your policy regarding contributing educators. You can find our updated guidance on Establishing Teacher-Course-Student Connections at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/TCS%20guidance%202016%20FINAL.pdf>

If you have any questions about roster verification, please submit a help desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

18. *Reminder: Non-Certified Staff reports due May 26*

In accordance with the federal report X059 we need your non-certified staff data to be submitted via the eRIDE Personnel Data Collection module by May 26. This includes all staff in the following categories:

- Elementary School Counselors
- Elementary Teachers
- Instructional Coordinators and Supervisors to the staff
- Kindergarten Teachers
- LEA Administrative Support Staff
- LEA Administrators
- Librarians/Media Specialists
- Library/Media Support Staff
- Paraprofessionals/Instructional Aides
- Pre-kindergarten Teachers
- School Administrative Support Staff
- School Administrators
- School Counselors
- Secondary School Counselors
- Secondary Teachers
- Student Support Services Staff
- Ungraded Teachers
- All Other Support Staff

The personnel assignment submission [user guide](#) will provide you with details on how to submit this data.

If you have any questions about the personnel-assignment collection, please submit a help desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

19. *Reminder:* Several data collections are open or due in the next few months

The following are upcoming data-collection deadlines:

- **Monday** (May 16): [Preliminary Coordinated Early Intervening Services - Due](#)
- **Tuesday** (May 17): [Special Education Census – Due](#)
- **Tuesday** (May 17): [Special Education Census Reporting - Due](#)
- May 23: [Roster Verification Principle Review \(Stage 1\) – Closes](#)
- May 24: [Special Ed Census, Duplicate Resolution - Due](#)
- May 24: [Special Ed Census Reporting, Duplicate Resolution - Due](#)
- May 25: [Roster Verification Teacher Review \(Stage 2\) – Opens](#)
- June 2: [Reporting Student Contacts - Due](#)
- June 3: [Annual School Health Report - Due](#)
- June 6: [Preliminary Program Core Data - Due](#)
- June 6: [Roster Verification Teacher Review \(Stage 2\) – Closes](#)
- June 6: [Roster Verification Principle Signoff \(Stage 3\) – Opens](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide

details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

Educators:

20. *Reminder:* RIDE seeking nominations for 2016-17 District Teachers of the Year by May 27

The 2016-17 District Teacher of the Year Profile Sheet has been posted on the Educator Recognition web page. District Teacher of the Year Profile Sheets are due by Friday, **May 27**. This year, 38 teachers from across Rhode Island represented their individual districts as District Teacher of the Year.

Each District Teacher of the Year (DTOY) will have the opportunity to take part in WaterFire: A Salute to Rhode Island Educators, participate in leadership professional development, collaborate with DTOYs from across the state, and apply to represent all Rhode Island Educators as the 2017 State Teacher of the Year. Please visit our Educator Recognition web page or click on the following link to download the 2016-17 District Teacher of the Year Profile Sheet:

www.ride.ri.gov/DTOY_2016-17_Application

If you have any questions regarding the District Teacher of the Year program, please contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov or 222-8497.

From the U.S. Department of Education (USED)

21. USED announces competition for \$65 million in grants for charter schools

The U.S. Department of Education has announced a competition to award \$65 million in grants to as many as 20 Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) across the country to create and expand charter schools that support students from underserved communities.

Since the inception of the [Charter Schools Program](#) (CSP), the Department has awarded over \$3 billion to schools across the country to provide students equitable educational opportunities.

Applications are due by June 20 and prospective applicants can join a webinar on **Monday** (May 1 from 2-3:30 p.m. to learn more. The Notice Inviting Applications and additional information on the Fiscal Year 2016 Competition can be found on the [CMO Applicant Info and Eligibility website](#).

From other organizations

22. *Reminder:* Highlander Institute seeks educators for 3rd cohort of Fuse RI Fellows; deadline is Monday (May 16)

The Highlander Institute is seeking rock-star educators to join the third cohort of Highlander Institute's Fuse Fellowship. Would you be willing to join us in this movement and help us spread the word by forwarding this to the educators you support?

[You can find the fellowship application here](#). The application deadline IS **Monday** (May 16).

Developed by the [Highlander Institute](#), Fuse RI strives to share, implement, evaluate, and scale blended learning by working with educators and districts across the state. Highlander Institute assembles and supports a “dream team” of Fuse RI Fellows – educators and administrators from schools around Rhode Island. Fuse Fellows partner with another district (separate from the one they work in) and collaborate with that district to assess readiness, analyze data, and help disseminate blended-learning best practices based on each district’s specific needs.

If you’d like to learn more, [check out the Fuse RI site](#), which includes a video explaining the Fuse Fellowship and Frequently Asked Questions about the fellowship.

If you have any questions about Fuse RI, please direct them to mklein@highlanderinstitute.org.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>