

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, June 3, 2016**

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Action Item Calendar

- Today** (June 3): [Annual School Health Report - Due](#)
- Monday** (June 6): [Preliminary Program Core Data - Due](#)
- Wednesday** (June 8): [Roster Verification Teacher Review \(Stage 2\) – Closes](#)
- June 16: [Preliminary CTE Collection for Approved Programs - Due](#)
- June 20: [Final Program Core Data - Due](#)
- June 20: [Final Coordinated Early Intervening Services \(EIS\) - Due](#)
June 20 – Reports on [interventions](#) due
- June 24: [Roster Verification Principal Signoff \(Stage 3\) – Closes](#)
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July 8 – [Evaluation](#) data due
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Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Commended Schools recognition ceremony scheduled for June 14

Our annual awards ceremony for the recognition of Rhode Island Commended Schools, the highest classification in our accountability system, will take place on Tuesday, June 14, at 4:30 p.m., at the Rockwell School (Bristol Warren). Governor Raimondo will join members of the Board of Education for the presentation of certificates to representatives from the 17 Commended Schools, which we announced in February. The 2016 Commended Schools are:

- Barrington: Barrington Middle School, Sowams Elementary School
- Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy Elementary School 2, Blackstone Valley Prep High School
- Bristol Warren: Rockwell School
- Chariho: Hope Valley Elementary School
- The Compass School
- Cranston: Orchard Farms Elementary School, Stone Hill School
- East Greenwich: Archie R. Cole Middle School
- Jamestown: Jamestown School-Melrose
- Johnston: Brown Avenue School
- Lincoln: Central Elementary School
- South Kingstown: Matunuck Elementary School, Peace Dale Elementary School, Wakefield Elementary School

- Tiverton: Fort Barton Elementary School

2. Education Week issues report on Class of 2014 graduation rates

Yesterday (June 2) the Education Week Research Center released its annual [Diplomas Count 2016](#), based on a national study of the four-year graduation rates for the Class of 2014. The report notes that our 2014 graduation rate was 81 percent, one point below the national average of 82 percent.

National data are not yet available for the Class of 2015, but, as we reported in February, our four-year graduation rate improved by 2 points in 2015 to its highest level ever: 83 percent. Moreover, the improvement was seen across all student groups, with graduation rates among black students up 5.2 points from the previous year, Hispanic students up 5.6 points, low-income students up 4.5 points, students with disabilities up 7.5 points, and English learners up 4.5 points.

For more information on Rhode Island graduation rates, see:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/RI-Public-Schools/Diploma-System/RI_High_School_Graduation_Rates_2009-2015.pdf .

3. DTOY blog post: Engineering design, 21st-century learning in the middle-school classroom

We asked Abby Paon, the Coventry District Teacher of the Year, how she has integrated engineering design and 21st-century learning in her middle-school classroom. Read her response, the

latest entry in our District Teacher of the Year blog, on the RIDE website home page (www.ride.ri.gov) or here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorRecognition/DistrictTeacherOfTheYear.aspx#DTOYblog>

4. Met School student wins entrepreneurship award

Ethan Chandler, a sophomore at the Met School (Providence), is an EY Young Scholar Recipient from the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship – New England. Ethan received this honor by creating Jam Sesh, a mobile app that brings local musicians together for impromptu jam sessions. In October, Ethan will participate in the National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, in New York. Congratulations on this achievement, Ethan!

5. R.I. schools win national awards for energy education

On Wednesday (June 1), the Office of Energy Resources presented the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Rhode Island awards, recognizing outstanding work in Rhode Island schools regarding the science of energy, energy sources, electricity generation, transportation, and energy efficiency at home and at school.

This year four Rhode Island schools received National Awards and Recognition from the NEED Project and will receive their national awards in Washington, D.C., on June 27:

- North Scituate Elementary School was selected as National Primary School of the Year (K-2) and the Rhode Island Primary School of the Year. Teacher: Kerri Luchka

- Scituate High School was selected as National Senior Runner-Up of the Year and Rhode Island Senior School of the Year. Teacher: Shannon Donovan
- Tiogue Elementary School (Coventry) was selected as National Elementary School Rookie of the Year and Rhode Island Elementary School Rookie of the Year. Teacher: Donna Raptakis
- Western Coventry Elementary School was selected as National Elementary School Runner-Up of the Year and Rhode Island Elementary School of the Year. Teacher: Kerri Luchka

Congratulations to all of the participating students and teachers and to the national award-winning schools!

6. *Reminder: Educators, youth workers invited to apply to be 2016 Career Readiness Fellows; applications due June 15*

Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Board of Education Chair Barbara S. Cottam invite K-12 educators; guidance counselors; youth-center staff; faculty and staff at the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, the University of Rhode Island; and any individuals who work with youth in government or in a nonprofit setting to apply to be a 2016 Career Readiness Fellow. Rhode Island is undertaking an initiative to promote career readiness throughout our education system and for all students. We need your help and are looking for fellows to take the lead in developing solutions in the following areas:

Project Area 1: Creating a Demand-Driven and Employer-Led Career System

- How can partnerships with industry help improve the quality of career programming?
- Have you thought about ways to better align the K-12 system with the needs of employers?
- Are you familiar with one of the new [P-Tech Programs](#) and do you want to explore other creative programs that work with industry to create real career and postsecondary pathways for students?

Project Area 2: Ensuring Rigor and Quality in Career Pathways for All

- Do you have ideas about how to incentivize career professionals to join the teaching corps or about how to increase the skills of existing teachers?
- Do you have ideas about how we can expose more elementary- and middle-school students to different types of careers?
- Have you come up with innovative ways we can improve career advising options for students?
- Have you developed interesting and engaging career-related or work-based curriculum?
- How do we ensure that current and new career-readiness programs are high quality and build the skills that matter to industry?

Project Area 3: Developing a Career-Focused Accountability System

- In what way should career-focused indicators be included within our state accountability system?

- What indicators will help schools and districts better prioritize career readiness?
- How would you define “career-ready”? What will it take for a student to be considered “college and career ready”?

Project Area 4: Creating Scaled Career Pathways that Culminate in Credentials

- Do you have thoughts about how Rhode Island can expand student pathways from high school to and through postsecondary education and into the workforce?
- Do you want to help identify ways to increase the number of certifications or stackable credentials earned by high-school students?
- Do you want to ensure that all high-school students receive some work-based or experiential learning experience – an internship, summer employment, after-school job, pre-apprenticeship, work experience – as part of the high-school experience?

Eligibility

If you have a perspective on these areas, then this fellowship is for you! We are looking to award up to four fellowships to K-12 public-school educators; guidance counselors youth-center staff; faculty and staff at the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, or the University of Rhode Island; or any individuals who work with youth in government or nonprofits in our state.

The Career Readiness Fellowship is a chance for practitioners in Rhode Island to make their voices heard and use their experience working with students in classrooms and schools to inform policy

around new efforts to expand career readiness for all students in Rhode Island, with a special emphasis on equity and opportunity for traditionally underserved populations.

As part of the Summer Fellowship, Fellows will:

- contribute toward the creation of a clear vision of what career readiness should and can be in Rhode Island;
- create and hone their own ideas for smart policy around increasing career-readiness opportunities for Rhode Island students;
- offer recommendations for short- and long-term policy changes that must be made to best support career-readiness initiatives in our state;
- conduct research on best practices and what other states are doing to promote career readiness;
- review and analyze labor market information to recommend strategies for developing new career-preparation programs;
- participate in working groups and policy trainings to develop an action plan for career readiness;
- survey the state to engage Rhode Islanders and to obtain ideas from across Rhode Island; and
- participate in state convenings and forums on career readiness.

Fellows must be able to commit to:

- attend an in-person, full-day orientation, training and design kick-off (date TBD);
- dedicate at least 100 hours over the months of July and August (the equivalent of 20 hours per week for five weeks);

- the work will be mostly completed in flexible hours and virtually, although weekly check-ins will be required; and
- being a state leader in career-readiness strategy beyond the summer, by participating in convenings and engaging with fellow educators.

As part of this commitment, Fellows will receive:

- A \$5,000 stipend for their efforts; and
- significant policy and leadership experience, with assistance and mentorship from state policy leaders.

How to Apply:

Please submit and a no more than one-page abstract with a proposal to address one of the four career-readiness project areas listed above. Proposals should include practical, achievable, but bold ideas the state can undertake to improve the career-readiness system in each area. If chosen, you will spend your time in the fellowship developing and preparing the proposal you submit for state adoption, with the assistance of state and industry leaders.

Applications will be due **June 15**. Please submit with a 1-page resume, including contact information, and your proposal to Arthur.nevins@governor.ri.gov .

Please also use the contact below for any questions:

Art Nevins
Office of Governor Gina M. Raimondo
401-222-8120 (office)
arthur.nevins@governor.ri.gov

From RIDE

Data Collection:

7. Deadline for roster verifications extended to Wednesday (June 8)

All educators who are contributing educators in English language arts (ELA) or mathematics should have verified their rosters during this past week. For educators who did not yet verify their rosters, the deadline has been extended through **Wednesday (June 8)**. The principal period (stage 3) of roster verification will now begin on Thursday (June 9) and continue through June 24.

To review and sign off on rosters, users must log in at RIDEmap (<https://ridemap.ride.ri.gov>) and click on the EPSS link. Please make sure that the teachers in your LEA are aware that they must verify their rosters if they are an ELA or math contributing educator to students in grades 4 through 8.

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

8. *Reminder:* Several data collections are open or due this month

The following are upcoming data-collection deadlines:

- **Today** (June 3): [Annual School Health Report - Due](#)
- **Monday** (June 6): [Preliminary Program Core Data - Due](#)
- **Wednesday** (June 8): [Roster Verification Teacher Review \(Stage 2\) – Closes](#)

- **Thursday (June 9):** [Roster Verification Principal Signoff \(Stage 3\) – Opens](#)
- June 16: [Preliminary CTE Collection for Approved Programs - Due](#)
- June 20: [Final Program Core Data - Due](#)
- June 20: [Final Coordinated Early Intervening Services \(EIS\) - Due](#)
- June 20: [Physical Restraint Data Collection - Opens](#)
- June 24: [Roster Verification Principal Signoff \(Stage 3\) – Closes](#)

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 feature.

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

9. USED releases toolkit to help current, former foster youth

Last week, USED released a toolkit to inspire and support foster youth pursuing college and career opportunities. The [Foster Care Transition Toolkit](#) includes tips and resources intended to help current and former foster youth access and navigate social, emotional, educational, and skills-based barriers as they transition into adulthood. Currently, there are more than 400,000 children and youth in the foster-care system, and, every year, some 23,000 youth age out of the system, having never found the security of a permanent home.

A high-quality education can help foster youth achieve life success despite past experiences with abuse, neglect, separation, and

other barriers. The toolkit advises on: financial aid and money management, mentoring opportunities, job and career support, health-care resources, transportation options, and housing and food benefits. It also provides many examples of existing efforts that assist foster youth.

The toolkit was designed by USED, in partnership with the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Transportation, and incorporates input from practitioners and foster youth.

10. USED accepting applications for internships

Are you interested in serving in the final term of the historic Obama administration at the U.S. Department of Education? Have you ever wondered about pursuing a federal career? Are you interested in public service? Would you like to gain valuable work experience and help move the needle on education issues in this country?

The USED may have opportunities that match your interests – and we’re currently accepting applications for interns! Our Department is a place where you can explore fields like education policy, education law, business and finance, research and analysis, intergovernmental relations and public affairs, or traditional and digital communications, all while learning about the role federal government plays in education. High-school and postsecondary-school students are eligible to apply. The deadline for applications for fall internships is **July 15**.

For information about internships at USED, see:

http://blog.ed.gov/2016/05/ed-seeks-fall-interns/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

From other organizations

11. Conference on Quality Performance Assessment to be held in Boston next month

Registration is open for [6th annual Quality Performance Assessment Summer Institute](#). Quality Performance Assessment (QPA) provides a flexible framework and set of tools that empower educators to examine the intersections of teaching, learning, and assessment. QPA enables students to engage in real-world topics and issues and to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways in order to prepare them for success. The Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) is offering a four-day Quality Performance Assessment conference for teachers, administrators, and district professionals from July 18 through 21, at Simmons College, in Boston. To register, visit:

www.qualityperformanceassessment.org.

For more information about the conference, contact CCE, at (617) 421-0134, ext. 230, or info@ccebos.org.

12. Barnes & Noble Summer Reading Program launches tomorrow (Saturday)

This year, the Barnes & Noble Summer Reading Program marks its 20th anniversary celebrating the power of books to expand children's horizons. We're partnering with educators like you to inspire readers in the first through sixth grades to have a summer

filled with reading and to earn free books! We're excited to introduce our Triathlon theme, which encourages students to stay in reading shape throughout the summer by actively pursuing their interest in books of their own choosing, strengthening their abilities, and stretching their imaginations along the way.

Whether they are staying home or traveling, students can pick the books they want to read and proceed at their own pace. Through September 6, students in grades 1 through 6 can complete BN Summer Reading Journals – they answer 3 of the 4 questions in the journal that are about reading – and bring their journal to any Barnes & Noble store and receive one of the free books that is offered. They can participate as many times as they wish throughout the summer. This goal of this program is to keep students in these grades reading throughout the summer.

Tomorrow (Saturday) at 11 a.m., we will hold our Summer Reading Triathlon Opening Ceremony and will kick off the program and the opportunity for kids to vote for their favorite heroes and places from a list of final medal contending titles. We will record a weekly tally of the votes kids have cast throughout the summer, listing out the gold, silver, and bronze contenders based on the kids' vote count. The voting polls will be close on Sunday, August 21, and we will hold a closing ceremony event on Saturday, August 27, at 11 a.m., to announce the local and national medal winners for favorite hero and favorite place from all the kids' votes over the summer. Kids attending the closing ceremony event will get a medal for their excellence in reading over the summer.

For more information about the program, see:

http://www.barnesandnoble.com/b/summer-reading/_/N-rs9

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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