

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, June 13, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. RIDE announces new Chief of [Accelerating School Performance](#), Chief of [Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies](#)
2. Board of Education to consider adoption of [Dual Language Program Standards](#)
3. Latest [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) results show positive trends

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

***Race to the Top:***

4. LEAs asked to review Race to the Top budgets to determine [spending status](#)

***Curriculum:***

5. RIDE provides access to [survey on curriculum](#) resources, which will provide individual reports to participating LEAs

***Data Systems:***

6. [Instructional Support System](#) now available to all R.I. educators

***Early Learning***

7. Rhode Island Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant initiative now known as [Exceed](#)

### **From other state agencies**

8. Plan proposed for distribution of greenhouse-gas initiative [auction proceeds](#)
- 

### **Action Item Calendar**

- June 20: School [Health](#) Reports due
  - June 20: [Roster verification](#) to be completed
  - June 23: Academic or [Behavioral-intervention final](#) data due
  - July 14: [Educator-evaluation data](#) due
  - July 15: [Housing aid](#) forms due
  - July 18: [UCOA](#) preliminary data due
  - September 30: [UCOA FY 2014](#) data due
- 

### **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

## **1. RIDE announces new Chief of Accelerating School Performance, Chief of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies**

I am pleased to let you know that on Monday Stephen Osborn will join RIDE as our new Chief of Accelerating School Performance. Stephen will be responsible for managing three RIDE offices: Multiple Pathways, School Transformation and Charter Schools, and Student, Community, and Academic Supports. The responsibilities within Stephen's division include coordinating federal grants programs such as Title I, Title III, Title IV, IDEA, Perkins, and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Schools; overseeing all administrative aspects of school improvement and charter-public-school authorizing; coordinating the integration of career-and-technical education, workforce development, and adult education; implementing proficiency-based graduation requirements; and overseeing school-health and extended-learning programs for school-aged youth. A University of Rhode Island graduate with a master's degree in public policy from Pepperdine University, Stephen comes to us from the Louisiana Department of Education, where he has been the Assistant Superintendent of Student Programs for the past two years. Previously, he had been the Chief Operating Officer at the Capital One New Beginnings Charter Schools Network, in New Orleans.

As Stephen Osborn steps into his new position, Andrea Castañeda becomes our new Chief of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, where she will manage our offices of Finance, Human Resources, Network and Information Systems, and Statewide Efficiencies. In addition to managing the RIDE budget and allocations of state aid, purchasing, and all grants and federal funds, Andrea's division is also responsible for RIDE personnel matters and labor relations, desktop and network support, data-collection systems and data-warehouse development, web-application design, mail and e-mail

services, the Uniform Chart of Accounts, school-construction programs, statewide student transportation, nutrition programs, and the Wireless Classroom Initiative.

I am sure you will have the opportunity to meet with Stephen Osborn soon as he takes on his new responsibilities at RIDE, and I am also sure that you will be glad to continue working with Andrea Castañeda in her new role at RIDE.

## **2. Board of Education to consider adoption of Dual Language Program Standards**

On Monday, the Board of Education will consider the adoption of the first Rhode Island Dual Language Program Standards. These standards set expectations for the quality and characteristics of dual-language programs across the state.

The contemporary workplace is a global one, so if our students are to succeed in challenging careers they will be at a great advantage if they are fluent in more than one language and if they have knowledge about world cultures.

Proficiency in world languages broadens economic opportunities for high-school and college graduates who are interested in international communications, technology, government, and business. Proficiency in world languages can open up career paths in banking and commerce, in the foreign service, in medicine, in the arts – and in numerous other challenging and rewarding fields. Proficiency in world languages also broadens our understanding of the humanities – opening students up to new ways of thinking about other languages and cultures, and about their own their language and culture as well. The study of world languages helps to build connections among all people on the

globe. Languages can be a pathway toward prosperity and toward peace.

Developing more high-quality dual-language programs can help us dramatically increase proficiency in world languages among Rhode Island students. Dual-language programs provide “literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages.”

Dual-language programs promote:

- bilingualism,
- biliteracy,
- grade-level academic achievement, and
- multicultural competence.

The proposed standards that the Board will consider for adoption on Monday include expectations in a number of areas, including:

- assessments and accountability,
- curriculum,
- instruction,
- staffing and professional development,
- program structure,
- family and community engagement, and
- support and resources.

The standards also recommend criteria for school districts that choose to award a “seal of biliteracy” to graduating students who have:

- participated in dual-language programs, or
- who can demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English.

You can read a copy of the standards [here](#).

### **3. Latest Youth Risk Behavior Survey results show positive trends**

Today the Department of Health released the latest Youth Risk Behavior Survey results from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey tracks the behavior over time of teenagers in public schools across the country. The latest results show that among Rhode Island teenagers, from 2007 to 2013:

- alcohol drinking fell from 43 percent to 31 percent;
- students not wearing seat belts fell from 14 percent to 6 percent;
- sexually active students fell from 33 percent to 27 percent;
- occasional smoking decreased from 15 percent to 8 percent;
- daily smoking decreased from 12 percent to 6 percent;
- the use of any tobacco product fell from 22 percent to 15 percent;
- physical fighting decreased from 26 percent to 19 percent; and
- dating violence decreased from 14 percent to 8 percent.

These are some very positive trends regarding the health and safety of our students – trends we have also seen in data we collect locally. I congratulate you on the work you are doing locally to ensure that our students make wise choices about their health, safety, and general well-being.

We must also keep in mind, however, that despite these positive trends, it is still alarming that nearly one of three teens in Rhode

Island drinks alcoholic beverages, one of every four is sexually active, nearly one of every ten experiences dating violence. To improve student health and well-being, it is important that we continue our partnerships toward helping students adopt and maintain healthy life choices and it is especially important that we help children make these choices at an early age.

## From RIDE

### ***Race to the Top:***

#### **4. LEAs asked to review Race to the Top budgets to determine spending status**

We want to thank you for getting in your final Year 4 amendments and Year 5 no-cost extension amendments into us by June 2. We have reviewed all the amendment requests, and we are reaching out to LEAs for clarifications on either budget questions or planned programmatic activities. We have also reviewed both the spending to date by all LEAs and what remains in the direct allocation for each LEA. Based on reimbursements through June 9, 22 percent of LEAs are on track to spend out their funds by September 23, 30 percent are close to being on track, and 48 percent are behind schedule. *Please review your Race to the Top budget in Accelegrant to determine the status of your spending.*

We are assuming that you will be spending your full direct allocation and that you will be submitting reimbursement requests for all of the Race to the Top activities that you have

completed as well as for any additional planned activities over the summer and early September, unless you have applied for a no-cost extension for specific activities that the U.S. Department of Education has approved. Under the Year 4 timelines, funds must be obligated by September 23 and liquidated by December 23. If you have any questions regarding the status of your Race to the Top budget or program activities, please contact [Leah.McPhail@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Leah.McPhail@ride.ri.gov), who will direct your request to the right member of the Race to the Top team.

***Curriculum:***

**5. RIDE provides access to survey on curriculum resources, which will provide individual reports to participating LEAs**

RIDE is making available to LEAs, at no cost, a cloud-based survey tool that provides insight into the use of curriculum resources within an LEA. District and school leaders will gain insight into how often resources are being used and what educators think about the resources. LEAs that complete the survey before the end of this year are guaranteed to receive a personalized teacher survey prepopulated with reported LEA resources, an LEA report, an online LEA curriculum database, and state and national information, all at no cost.

Access to the Curriculum Insight tool and report requires very little effort for the district or school. Contact [Holly Walsh](#) to get started. Your LEA will receive a link to your prepopulated teacher survey, which takes less than 5 minutes to complete. Reports will be available to you next month. The data will prompt conversations and decisions related to quality, implementation status, purchasing strategies, and need for professional development.

## ***Data Systems:***

### **6. Instructional Support System now available to all R.I. educators**

As promised, the Instructional Support System is now available to all educators in Rhode Island. This new, robust system provides 5 years of longitudinal data for assessments, enrollment, and attendance to district and school administrators and to all classroom teachers. The Instructional Support System is loaded with more than 40 million data points. You can sign on and access the Instructional Support System through RIDEmap.

You can find user guides, at:

[Instructional Support System.](#)

Customer service is available through the RIDEmap helpdesk, at:

[https://support.ride.ri.gov.](https://support.ride.ri.gov)

Your feedback and suggestions are appreciated and welcome, and you can send your comments to us through the helpdesk.

## ***Early Learning***

### **7. Rhode Island Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant initiative now known as Exceed**

The Rhode Island Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant initiative is now called Exceed, a name publicly conveys our commitment to early-childhood development. The power in the

name Exceed is that in one word it conveys the goal that all the statewide partners have for the children of Rhode Island. Exceed supports the children of Rhode Island to achieve new heights in their learning. The partners are committed to helping all children to Exceed.

For the May grant update from Exceed, go to:

<http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=3d18b7a1497e7cd9440bb20d5&id=b0c057f421&e=4c58f9bf62>

### **From other state agencies**

#### **8. Plan proposed for distribution of greenhouse-gas initiative auction proceeds**

Please see these notices from the Office of Energy Resources regarding a proposed plan for the allocation and distribution of regional greenhouse-gas initiative auction proceeds:

<http://www.energy.ri.gov/documents/rggi/2014%20Plan%20Items/Annual%20RGGI%20Allocation%20Plan%20-%202014%20FINAL.pdf>

<http://www.energy.ri.gov/documents/rggi/2014%20Plan%20Items/2014%20RGGI%20Notice.pdf>

***RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:***

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