

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo  
Friday, September 25, 2015**

**Notes from Commissioner Wagner**

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2. *Reminder:* Schools encouraged to form teams to design the [next American high school](#)
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***Legal:***

7. *Corrected link from last week's Field Memo:* RIDE issues Commissioner's decision on home schooling

**From the U.S. Department of Education**

8. Education, Justice Departments release [English Learner tool kits](#)

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### **Action Item Calendar**

**Wednesday** (September 30): [Personnel data](#) collection due

**Wednesday** (September 30): [Special Ed](#) evaluations due

**Thursday** (October 1): [Personnel Assignment](#) Submission updates due

October 9: [PARCC](#) test-options survey response

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### **Notes from Commissioner Wagner**

- 1. *Reminder:* All are invited to celebration of educator excellence at WaterFire tomorrow (Saturday)**

This year RIDE will honor Rhode Island educators for their outstanding service and dedication to the education profession and to Rhode Island students at “WaterFire: A Salute to Rhode

Island Educators.” This event will be held **tomorrow** (Saturday, September 26), from 5 - 9 p.m., in downtown Providence.

At 5 p.m., an awards ceremony will be held at Memorial Park (at the corner of South Main and College Streets). Please join us as we recognize the following educators:

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certified educators
- 2014 Rhode Island Milken Family Foundation Educator Award winner
- Presidential Award winners and finalists for mathematics and science teaching
- 2015 Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teacher of the Year
- 2015 School Business Official of the Year
- 2015 Adult Education Teacher of the Year
- Rhode Island Superintendent of the Year
- Rhode Island Principals of the Year
- Rhode Island Support Professionals of the Year
- 2015-16 District Teachers of the Year
- 2016 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year

All are welcome to attend the celebration to support our Rhode Island educators. In addition to the awards ceremony, this family-oriented event will include a procession featuring the honored educators, culminating with a “Ring of Fire” at the basin in downtown Providence. A private reception for honored educators and their guests will follow.

At this event we will announce a “crowd-sourcing” initiative to raise funds in support of the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year

Program. We will encourage community members to make a donation to support:

- a co-teacher to work alongside the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year;
- classroom resources and professional development for the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year and for all District Teachers of the Year;
- participation in the State Teachers of the Year national conference; and
- our annual Salute to Rhode Island Educators event at WaterFire Providence.

You and members of your community can donate by going to:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorRecognition/GivetoTeachers.aspx>

Please share this message with your principals and with other educators.

If you have questions about this event, please contact Mary Keenan, at [mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov](mailto:mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov).

## **2. *Reminder:* Schools encouraged to form teams to design the next American high school**

We also want to remind you about the opportunity to form a team and enter the XQ Super School Project, a contest in which teams of students (age 13 or older) plus one adult team leader develop a plan to “design the next American high school.”

As described on the XQ Super School Project website:

Teams will unite and take on this important work of our time: rethinking and building schools that deeply prepare our students for the rigorous challenges of college, jobs, and life.

The XQ Institute, a California-based nonprofit corporation, will select five winning projects and will provide \$10 million in funds (over five years) for *each* winning project.

If you're thinking about participating in this project, you might want to look at this article on "rethinking high schools" that the Center on Reinventing Public Education has published:

<http://www.crpe.org/thelens/rethinking-high-schools-past-efforts-should-inform-new-models>

Initial entries in the XQ Super School Challenge are due February 1, 2016. **November 15** is the deadline to share your concept and confirm eligibility. There is an XQ informational "road show" in Boston on **October 7**. You can find more information on the XQ Super School Project website, at:

<http://xqsuperschool.org/challenge>

In addition to the support provided by the XQ Institute, we at RIDE and other Rhode Island partners would love to work with and provide support to anyone interested in forming a team to participate in this design project. Please let us know if you have any questions or if you have a team that's ready to launch:

[info@ride.ri.gov](mailto:info@ride.ri.gov).

Regardless of who wins, the visioning process would be a powerful experience for your entire school community.

### **3. RIDE issues reminder on residency and school enrollment**

As the beginning of the school year traditionally brings about many questions on the issue of school residency, RIDE General Counsel David V. Abbott has written a brief reminder of the process by which we resolve disputes about student residency. His message is posted here:

[http://ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Commish-Msgs/Residency\\_Memo\\_September\\_2015.pdf](http://ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Commish-Msgs/Residency_Memo_September_2015.pdf)

**From RIDE**

***Educator Evaluations:***

### **4. RIDE offering calibration sessions for evaluators**

RIDE is offering the following calibration workshops for LEAs:

*SLO and SOO Calibration Workshops:* These workshops can be conducted with evaluators as the primary audience or with teachers and administrators as the primary audience. These workshops are available to all LEAs.

When the audience is evaluators, the purpose of the Student Learning Objective (SLO) Calibration workshop is to assess and increase consistency of SLO approval. In the session, participants use the SLO and Student Outcome Objective (SOO) Quality Review Tools to determine SLO approval, identify areas of divergent thinking among

evaluators, and establish a common understanding and approach to SLO and SOO approval. This workshop will help evaluators solidify their understanding of what makes an SLO high quality, which can then guide the work they do with teachers.

Teachers and support professionals can also benefit from an SLO or SOO Calibration Workshop by helping teachers and support professionals increase their understanding of what makes an SLO or SOO high quality and how they can use SLOs and SOOs to inform their instruction and support of students. RIDE can work with school or district leadership to co-facilitate a workshop for teachers and support professionals.

*Professional Practice Support Professional Calibration:*

During this session, participants review and practice how to collect evidence, align evidence to the rubric, write rationales, and craft feedback that can be used to help support professionals improve their practice. Through calibration activities and discussions, participants identify areas to develop a shared, common understanding of the Support Professional Practice Rubric. This workshop is available to all LEAs using the Rhode Island Model for support professionals.

If you are interested in having a RIDE staff member facilitate a calibration session for evaluators in your LEA, please contact Lauren Matlach, at [lauren.matlach@ride.ri.gov](mailto:lauren.matlach@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8456.

**5. *Reminder:* RIDE to hold webinars on educator-evaluation resources and systems**

On **Monday** (September 28) from 4 - 5 p.m., RIDE will hold a webinar for district leaders, school leaders, and preparation programs focusing on the ETS video library. This library includes videos of professional practice that can be used for a variety of purposes, including discussions about professional practice. During this webinar, RIDE will provide an overview of how to access, search, and use the ETS Video Library, which is now available to all LEAs and preparation programs. The webinar will also share ways that districts and preparation programs might use the ETS video library for training and professional learning purposes. Register here [for the webinar](#).

On **Wednesday** (September 30) from 4 - 5 p.m., RIDE will hold an Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) refresher webinar for evaluators and LEA leaders. During this webinar, RIDE staff members will review how to access, enter, and use forms and data on the EPSS. This webinar is a great opportunity for new and returning evaluators and LEA staff members to re-familiarize themselves with EPSS and ask questions about using the system. Register here [for the webinar](#).

If you have questions about the webinars, please contact Alicia Reniere, at [alicia.reniere@ride.ri.gov](mailto:alicia.reniere@ride.ri.gov).

**6. *Reminder: Workshop for new evaluators scheduled for Thursday, Friday (October 1 and 2)***

RIDE is offering a two-day version of the workshop for new evaluators on **Thursday and Friday** (October 1 and 2) at the Shepard Building (80 Washington St./255 Westminster St., Providence). All evaluators new to the Rhode Island Model who have not yet attended the workshop for new evaluators should

plan on attending this workshop. The workshop will focus on preparing evaluators to accurately observe and score practice, provide high-quality feedback, set and approve Student Learning and Outcome Objectives, and use the Educator Performance and Support System. Register for the workshop on [eRIDE](#). If you have questions about the workshop, please contact Lauren Matlach at [lauren.matlach@ride.ri.gov](mailto:lauren.matlach@ride.ri.gov).

**Legal:**

**7. *Corrected link from last week's Field Memo:* RIDE issues Commissioner's decision on home schooling**

Homeschooled student is entitled to attend on a part-time basis career-preparation program offered at career-and-technical center

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/012-15%20B.%20Doe%20%20v.%20South%20Kingstown%20School%20Committee%209-2015.pdf>

**From the U.S. Department of Education**

**8. Education, Justice Departments release English Learner tool kits**

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice have jointly release an English Learner Tool Kit to help districts and schools meet their legal obligations regarding English Learners and regarding ensuring access to a public education. To read the news release announcing these tool kits, see:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/senior-obama-administration-officials-release-english-learner-tool-kit>

To access the tool kit, see:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>.

### **From other organizations**

#### **9. Schools, students challenged to create concepts for mobile apps**

Please see this message from the Verizon Foundation:

The [Verizon Innovative App Challenge](#) – the no-coding-skills-needed contest that gives middle- and high-school students a chance to bring their problem-solving app ideas to life – is back!

In its fourth year, the App Challenge calls students to gather teams, dream up ideas, and create concepts for mobile apps that could solve problems in their schools and communities. The deadline for submission is **November 24**, and the winners will be named in January.

Created by the [Verizon Foundation](#) in partnership with the [Technology Student Association](#), the App Challenge offers hands-on, experiential learning to ultimately help students envision brighter futures for themselves that they may never have imagined, as business owners, app inventors and professional coders.

New this year, Best in State winners of the Verizon Innovative App Challenge, one team of middle school students and one team of high school students from every state and D.C., will win \$5,000 grants for their schools, groups, or clubs, and tablets for every team member. And eight Best in Nation winners will receive an additional \$15,000 in grants for their schools, groups, or clubs, as well as hands-on and virtual training from MIT Media Lab experts to turn their concepts into working apps available for download. The Best in Nation winners will also present their apps in person at the 2016 Technology Student Association National Conference.

For more information on how to enter and tips for creating the next winning idea, visit [www.verizon.com/appchallenge](http://www.verizon.com/appchallenge).

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

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