

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo  
Friday, October 4, 2013**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. Registration opens today for the October 26 Cut to the Core: CCSS Networking Conference
2. LEAs asked to nominate U.S. Presidential Scholars candidates

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

***Grants and Funding***

3. Funding available to support healthy youth development
4. Common Core State Standards Mini-Grant Open for Applications

***Legal***

5. Commissioner makes decision regarding students in DCYF custody

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**Action Item Calendar**

Today: Common Core [survey](#) due

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**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. Registration opens today for the October 26 Cut to the Core: CCSS Networking Conference

Registration is now open for the October 26 Cut to the Core: CCSS Networking Conference sponsored by the Educators in Action Cabinet. All educators are encouraged to attend this free event to connect with their peers and learn more

about Common Core instruction, implementation and connection to other content areas. Don't miss this opportunity to hear from your peers about their experiences with a variety of projects and strategies relating to Common Core implementation. The conference includes a panel of distinguished educators from across the state who will be facilitating discussions, presenting experiences and leading interactive sessions designed to encourage peer-to-peer collaboration around the Common Core.

The conference will take place Saturday, October 26, from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., at the New England Institute of Technology's East Greenwich campus. Conference and registration information is available at [www.ride.ri.gov/EIA-CCSS-Conference](http://www.ride.ri.gov/EIA-CCSS-Conference). Space is limited, so register early!

## **2. LEAs asked to nominate U.S. Presidential Scholars candidates**

The Commission on Presidential Scholars, of the U.S. Department of Education, has asked me to nominate students from Rhode Island as 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars. I am seeking your help in selecting the best possible nominees from Rhode Island.

The Presidential Scholars Program honors outstanding high-school seniors who are selected on the basis of either outstanding scholarship (based on SAT or ACT scores) or accomplishment in the arts or creative writing. In order to expand the nominee pool, the Commission has asked me to nominate additional candidates, "students who, while demonstrating outstanding scholarship, might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT or arts-recognition processes."

To help me select these additional Rhode Island nominees, I ask you to nominate one male and one female high-school senior (who are citizens or legal permanent residents of the U.S., graduating between January and June of 2014) from each high school in your LEA. In selecting U.S. Presidential Scholars from among the nominees, the Commission will consider:

- involvement and service, in school and community;
- leadership and character;
- writing samples;
- academic achievements; and

- extraordinary achievement, heavy work load, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.

Each student you nominate should prepare an application that includes:

- his or her resume, including home mailing address;
- a letter of reference from you or a school official that explains how the student stands out as having outstanding scholarship; and
- a brief (approximately 500 to 750 words) essay that responds to this question: "What special challenges or hurdles have you overcome while still achieving high academic success?"

Either you or your high-school principal(s) will be our contact in this process. I would ask either you or your principals (not the nominated students) to submit your nominations to Dana Wilson ([dana.wilson@ride.ri.gov](mailto:dana.wilson@ride.ri.gov)) by November 11.

From nominations we receive, I will select six nominees from Rhode Island (three male students, three female students).

The Commission will select finalists by mid-January 2014, and Scholars will be announced at the beginning of May. Scholars will receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June. For more information about the program, see:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html>

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

#### ***Grants and Funding***

#### **3. Funding available to support healthy youth development**

The RIDE Office of Student, Community and Academic Support is seeking 15 district partners to participate in a five-year Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funded grant opportunity to support healthy youth development. Participating districts need to meet certain eligibility requirements, including a demonstrated willingness and ability to participate in this effort through July 31, 2018. Letters of intent must be received by Friday, October 25, 2013. The formal invitation and details are available at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Health-Safety/healthy-youth-partnership.pdf>.

#### **4. Common Core State Standards Mini-Grant Open for Applications**

The Office of Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment is pleased to announce a mini-grant for Common Core State Standards implementation. All Local Education Agencies are invited to apply. RIDE will award multiple grants of up to \$20,000. The application should further the LEA's strategic plan for Common Core State Standards implementation including building system-wide capacity and sustainability.

The application is due to RIDE on Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Grant awards will be announced on Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. For grant application and instructions, please go to [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-mini-grants](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-mini-grants).

Questions can be directed to Kate Schulz at [kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov) or 401- 222-8489.

#### ***Legal***

#### **5. Commissioner makes decision regarding students in DCYF custody**

The Commissioner has made a decision which determines financial and educational responsibility for a student in DCYF custody, when school stability decision under Fostering Connections Act is made by the family court. The decision can be found on the RIDE website at:

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/023-13 Residency of Student C.M. DOE 91713.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/023-13%20Residency%20of%20Student%20C.M.%20DOE%2091713.pdf)

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

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