

## Attachments

## Attachment 1: Notice to LEAs

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo  
Friday, March 14, 2014**

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### **Action Item Calendar**

March 28: [Distinguished Educator](#) recommendations due

March 28: [Textbook](#) lists due

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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. Rhode Island receives approval for Race to the Top no-cost extension**

Over the course of the four years of our Race to the Top federal grant, we have used the \$75 million to support transforming education in Rhode Island. Among the major initiatives the grant has supported are:

- professional development for educators on transition to the Common Core State Standards,
- development by educators of curriculum in English language arts and mathematics aligned with the standards,
- professional development for educators on the use of data,
- implementation of annual evaluations for all educators,
- induction program and supports for new teachers,
- academy for training aspiring principals,
- development and implementation of virtual learning math modules for students.

At this time, Rhode Island has met almost all goals in our Race to the Top application, and the state and all 52 participating school districts have expended almost all of the \$75 million grant

funding. This entire project has been a success thanks to the ongoing and extensive partnerships formed among RIDE and the teams from your LEA and all other participating LEAs. I am deeply grateful for your hard work and support as we have implemented these many new systems and initiatives over the past four years.

On Wednesday, we learned that the U.S. Department of Education has approved our request for a no-cost extension to our Race to the Top Scope of Work, which will give us additional time to complete a few specific projects that RIDE initiated using funds from the grant. As its name implies, the no-cost extension will entail no additional cost to Rhode Island; rather, it gives us an additional year to expend remaining funds and to achieve our Race to the Top goals.

The U.S. Department of Education has approved our request to use \$2.4 million in remaining funds. Of this total, \$1,952,000 will enable RIDE to complete work on a system, now known as the Instructional Support System, that will provide all educators with support and resources, including:

- information to better serve our students;
- a bank of Common Core-aligned items, for classroom use;
- model lesson plans and units of study;
- assessments for measuring student progress (Interim Assessments); and
- other resources and information that support teaching and learning.

The Instructional Management System is still available for your use. The redesign of the system, which will be called the Instructional Support System, is under way; phase 1 will be ready

for use in June, and the redesign will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

As our team discussed with you yesterday at the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association general meeting, you have met your commitments regarding this Race to the Top-funded initiative, so no further steps on your part are necessary for you to begin using the Instructional Support System. Thanks to the no-cost extension, however, you will have the opportunity to request unspent Race to the Top funds to further your expertise in the use of the data and resources in the Instructional Support System.

Our no-cost extension provides funding for two additional components of the Race to the Top Scope of Work:

- \$200,000 for develop a “platform” to provide educators with better access to professional development; and
- approximately \$280,000 to provide additional professional development to educators preparing to work in the lowest-achieving schools.

Our Race to the Top team will communicate further with you regarding potential changes to your approved Scope of Work, the rollout schedule of the Instructional Support System, and opportunities for further professional development regarding data, resources, and support for struggling schools.

I am very pleased to say that, thanks to this no-cost extension, Rhode Island is on course to expend all Race to the Top funds and to meet the goals agreed to in our Race to the Top Scope of Work.

## **2. Next year’s junior class to take NECAP, not PARCC assessments**

One topic we discussed this week at the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association general meeting concerned our testing schedule for the next school year (2014-15). I know there has been some confusion in the field, so I want to clarify the matter: Next year's junior class (Class of 2016) will take the NECAP assessments in the fall (October 2014); next year's junior class will *not* be required to take the PARCC assessments and the students will not be "double-tested." Next year's freshman and sophomore classes will take PARCC assessments, beginning in the Spring of 2015. These students (Class of 2017 and Class of 2018) will be the first to take the PARCC assessments as part of both our annual state assessments and our diploma system.

As you may be aware, we will describe these accountability-system revisions in the application we will submit to the U.S. Department of Education for an extension of our Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver. To help guide us in developing this application, we are working with a focus group, which includes superintendents and heads of school. I am interested in any and all feedback from the field, so if you have any comments or concerns about these revisions to our accountability system please feel free to share your concerns with me. Your opinions (including support for our transition to the PARCC assessments) will help us prepare our request for a waiver extension.

### **3. RIDE developing options for cyclical structures within annual educator-evaluation systems**

Last year, based on feedback we received, we put in place the option for differentiated educator evaluations, which has reduced the workload and streamlined the process for evaluators – but we know that there is more to do. Over the past several months, we

have been working with folks from a handful of LEAs and we have been using feedback from our mid-year educator-evaluation surveys to review the differentiated model for educator evaluations. Our goal is to see how we can create cyclical structures (something many have been advocating) within the system of annual evaluations. We plan to come up with some options for LEAs, which you will be able to try out locally, as early as the coming school year. We will be providing you with more information about these cyclical structures in future communications.

#### **4. Housing aid available for repairs needed for health and safety**

You may have seen a news story last week that reported on unhealthy conditions in one of our public schools. The report implied that state funding (housing aid) would not be available for repair work in this school because of the current moratorium on school construction. Please keep in mind that maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff members is our highest priority. The current moratorium on school construction does allow for construction or repairs necessary “for immediate health and safety reasons,” (RIGL 16-7-41.1) and several such emergency projects have received approval during the time of the moratorium.

As a reminder from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies, state law requires annual school-facility inspections by local or state building inspectors and fire chiefs, as well as by other authorities having jurisdiction. Establishing and maintaining high standards for [indoor environmental quality](#) requires ongoing maintenance and operations efforts involving all members of the educational community. On our website, you can access applicable healthy

school-building laws and regulations, posted under our [Coordinated School Health Program](#) and [School Construction Program](#).

## **5. Families informed about PARCC Field Test**

As we prepare for the beginning of the PARCC Field Test on **March 24**, I have prepared this letter to all friends of education, which we will distribute over the next few days through our list-serve and on social media:

As we continue working together to transform education in Rhode Island, one of our top priorities has been adopting college- and career-ready standards that clearly state what our students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Over the past three years, we have worked with teachers and school leaders across the state to prepare for the new Common Core State Standards, and I am pleased that this year these standards are guiding instruction in all of our public schools.

Another priority for us has been developing assessments to help us see whether students have mastered the Common Core State Standards. In partnership with educators in 16 other states, we have been working for three years to develop a new set of assessments called PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). Next year, our schools will transition to these new PARCC assessments. Students in grades 3 through 10 will take PARCC assessments in the spring of 2015. (Students in grade 11 will take the NECAP, in October 2014.)

To help everyone get ready for PARCC, about 9,000 students in most of our schools will participate in a PARCC “field test,” beginning on Monday, March 24. For most participating students, this practice test will take a total of about 3 to 5 hours, over two or three sessions. The experience of participating in the practice run will give students and teachers the opportunity to become more familiar with PARCC, helping to get them ready for the actual assessments next year. Keep in mind that there will be no report of results from this year’s practice run, so there is no need for any anxiety about performance during the field test. And by the way – we expect glitches to occur during the practice run. We want to iron out the bugs now so that everything will go more smoothly when we roll out PARCC assessments next year.

I truly believe PARCC assessments will improve teaching and learning in our state in several ways. Like our current assessments, PARCC assessments will ask students to provide written responses to many questions, giving students the opportunity to show what they know and can do. Unlike our current assessments, however, PARCC will be offered in the spring – in line with the materials students are taking in their current classes. Unlike the NECAP, students will take PARCC assessments during two separate testing windows – but the total number of testing hours will be very similar to the current testing schedule: about 9 hours per student, depending on grade level. (One difference is that PARCC will assess writing proficiency in grades 3 through 11, not in three grades only.)

For most students, PARCC will be computer-based and therefore more engaging for students. Teachers will receive

results much more quickly than they received NECAP results, so they can use information from PARCC to better guide instruction and to support individual students. Of course the questions on PARCC line up with the standards in the Common Core, so the PARCC material will be familiar to our teachers and to the students taking the assessments. We have posted a number of helpful materials on PARCC assessments on our [website](#), and the PARCC consortium [website](#) has important materials on the field test as well.

Our students have made significant progress over the past five years, and I believe the Common Core and the new PARCC assessments will help us continue on the right course in the coming years. The PARCC field test will be an important step on this exciting journey!

## **6. NECAP retest process completed**

On Tuesday, we completed the NECAP retake process for high-school seniors who had not yet fulfilled the state-assessment component of the Diploma System. I am extremely grateful for the excellent organization and the spirit of hope and accomplishment that our assessment team encountered in school districts across the state. The hard work and positive attitude from you, your staff members, and your students made this process proceed smoothly. Every report I have received has emphasized that the students and staff members took this retest opportunity seriously, that students were trying hard to show their best work throughout the testing, and that many students felt proud and optimistic on the completion of the assessments. We will have results for you by the end of next month, and I believe that many students will show improvement and that the

Class of 2014 will be more ready for success beyond high school than any other graduating class from our state.

## **7. Presentation scheduled on Common Core, PARCC**

The Rhode Island ASCD has announced a professional-development opportunity, “Keeping Up with the Core: What Rhode Island Educators Need to Know to Implement Common Core Thoughtfully and Prepare Purposefully for PARCC,” to be held on **Wednesday** (March 19), from 4 to 5:30 p.m., at the Cranston Public Library, Sockanosset Cross Road.

The RI-ASCD notes that this high-level presentation and discussion will provide an overview of what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) mean for our students and our classrooms and how the CCSS prepares our students for college and challenging careers. The presenters will provide an overview of the latest information that Rhode Island educators should know to implement CCSS thoughtfully and to prepare purposefully for PARCC assessments. The presentation will also discuss and model ways to discuss the CCSS with parents and the community. A question-and-answer period will allow for dialogue on common issues related to CCSS implementation. Handouts will be provided. Register at [www.riascd.org](http://www.riascd.org)

**From RIDE**

***Health and Safety:***

**8. National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day to be held  
April 10**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, in 2010, young people aged 13 to 24 accounted for 26 percent of all new HIV infections in the United States, and nearly half of the 19 million new sexually transmitted diseases reported each year are among young people ages 15 to 24. In an effort to bring attention to this issue, **April 10** has been designated as National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day. The 2014 theme is: Engaging Youth Voices in the AIDS/HIV Response. Today's young people are the first generation that has never known a world without HIV and AIDS. An AIDS-free generation is not possible without our nation's youth. Please feel free to share the HIV/AIDS Awareness resources that are available on the Advocates for Youth website, at <http://amplifyyourvoice.org/nyhaad> with your school staff. The Department of Health has additional resources for HIV prevention, at:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/healthyliving/sexualhealth/about/safersex/index.php>

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

#### **9. Information released on federal budget, early learning, FAFSAs, nutrition, poster contest, emergency preparedness**

Please see these notices from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

#### **Education Budget**

On March 4, after sending his [annual budget request](#) to Congress, President Obama visited Powell Elementary School in Washington, D.C., highlighting the school's

preschool program as a model for the nation. “These kids may not be the most excited people in town on budget day,” the President said, “but my budget is designed with their generation and future generations in mind. In my State of the Union address, I laid out an agenda to restore opportunity for all people... The budget I sent Congress this morning lays out how we’ll implement this agenda in a balanced and responsible way. It’s a roadmap for creating jobs with good wages and expanding opportunity for all Americans. And at a time when our deficits have been cut in half, it allows us to meet our obligations to future generations without leaving them a mountain of debt.”

The President is requesting \$68.6 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Education, an increase of \$1.3 billion – or 1.9 percent – over the Fiscal Year 2014 level. “The President’s budget request reflects his strong belief that education is a vital investment in the nation’s economic competitiveness, in its people, and in its communities,” Secretary Duncan said. “Despite the encouraging progress we’ve seen, wide opportunity and achievement gaps continue to hurt many families, which puts our nation’s economy and future at risk.”

The President proposed a new initiative called [Race to the Top-Equity and Opportunity](#), which would create incentives for states and school districts to drive comprehensive change in identifying and closing both achievement and opportunity gaps. Grants would enhance data systems to sharpen the focus on the greatest disparities and invest in strong teachers and leaders in high-need schools. Grants would also support other strategies that mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty, such as expanded learning time,

access to rigorous coursework, and comprehensive student supports. (See also [Equity of Opportunity](#).)

The President also proposed the new [ConnectEDucators program](#), which would provide funding to help teachers and principals better leverage new resources made available through technology to improve college- and career-ready instruction and personalize learning. Technology can help educators teach to more rigorous standards, but technology alone cannot improve student learning. Educators must know how to make the best use of technology – such as creating and sharing high-quality open digital content – and how to use data to help students learn. (See also [Teachers and Leaders](#).)

Among the continued priorities, targeted to strengthen the education pipeline from cradle-to-career, are:

- making high-quality preschool, infant and toddler care, and home visiting available for children ([more](#));
- improving affordability, quality, and success in postsecondary education ([more](#)); and
- making schools safer and creating positive learning environments ([more](#)).

Want to dig deeper? Among the resources online are a [press release](#), a [blog post](#), the [budget summary](#), and [fact sheets on cross-cutting issues](#). Furthermore, one can [view video](#) from the agency's budget briefing for stakeholders and [listen](#) to the agency's press call.

## **Early Learning**

Last week, Secretary Duncan and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius [visited the newest preschool](#) among the Child and Family Network Centers in Alexandria, Virginia, to observe a quality bilingual program in action and discuss the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2015. He proposed \$500 million – double last year's funding – for Preschool Development Grants and reintroduced the Preschool for All initiative, with an initial \$1.3-billion investment. There is also additional funding requests for Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants, and evidence-based home visiting.

This week, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services held a stakeholder briefing on federal investments in early learning and development ([view video](#)).

Also, both agencies are seeking additional input on the 2014 Preschool Development Grants competition through a [dedicated website](#), as well as a public meeting on Thursday (March 20), from 3:30 to 5 p.m., in Washington, D.C. ([watch live](#)).

### **Student Loans**

Last week, at an event with the First Lady at Coral Reef High School, President Obama laid out [details of his plan](#) to equip all Americans with the education and skills they need to compete in today's global economy and launched a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion initiative to give more students the opportunity to attend, afford, and graduate from college. "Unfortunately, there are still a lot of young people all across the country who say the cost of college is holding them back," he asserted. "Some of you may have sat around the kitchen table with your

parents, wondering about whether you'll be able to afford it. FAFSA is – by far, the easiest way to answer that question.”

Under the [FAFSA Completion Initiative](#), the U. S. Department of Education will partner with states so that they can identify individual students who have not completed the FAFSA. States can then use this limited information to support school and district efforts to increase FAFSA completion, starting in the 2014-15 school year. These efforts build on the success of a pilot project launched by the agency in 2010 working directly with about 100 districts. (Note: In a [letter to the nation's governors](#), Secretary Duncan explains the history, requirements, and procedures for this initiative.)

### **Healthy Lunchtime Challenge**

The First Lady is again challenging America's most creative junior chefs to put their talents to use and whip up delicious lunchtime recipes. The third “[Healthy Lunchtime Challenge and Kids' State Dinner](#)” invites children, ages 8 to 12, and their parents or guardians, to create and submit an original lunch recipe that is healthy, affordable, and tasty. All recipes must adhere to the guidance that supports the U.S.

Department of Agriculture's [MyPlate](#). Recipes must also represent each of the food groups, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy foods, with fruits and vegetables making up roughly half of the plate or recipe. Fifty-six children and their parent or guardian - one pair from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories – will be flown to Washington, D.C., to attend a Kids' State Dinner at the White House, during which a selection of the winning

recipes will be served. Recipes may be submitted online through **April 5**.

### **Poster Contest**

The White House invites elementary- and middle-school students to submit original [poster designs](#) for the 2014 Easter Egg Roll. This year's theme, "Hop into Healthy, Swing into Shape," promotes the First Lady's [Let's Move!](#) initiative to help kids grow up healthy and reach their full potential. The deadline for submissions is **March 21**, and the winning design will be part of the White House's 2014 Easter Egg Roll program.

### **Emergency Preparation**

Communities are better prepared to withstand an emergency and recover quickly when everyone is involved. Yet, despite an increase in weather-related disasters, nearly 70 percent of Americans have not participated in a preparedness drill or exercise – aside from a fire drill – at their home, school, or workplace in the past two years. In an effort to continue building resilience, the federal family is pleased to announce [America's PrepareAthon!](#) The first America's PrepareAthon! National Day of Action is April 30. It will focus on preparing individuals, organizations, and communities for tornados, hurricanes, flooding, and wildfires. (Note: All are invited to participate in a webinar – Tuesday ([March 18](#)) or Thursday ([March 20](#)) – to learn more about the campaign and ways to be involved.)

## **10. New round of Investing in Innovation grants announced**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement:

The Office of Innovation and Improvement has published a Notice Inviting Applications for awards up to \$3 million each in the “Development” category of the 2014 [Investing in Innovation](#) (i3) grant competition. In its fifth round of competition, the i3 program continues its aim to develop and expand practices that accelerate student achievement and prepare all students to succeed in college and careers. This year’s areas of focus include English Learners, students with disabilities, and technology-enabled learning, among others.

**11. Schools, students encouraged to sign up for updates on First Lady’s visit to China**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership:

The First Lady will travel to China from Wednesday (March 19) through March 26. During the trip to China, as on previous international trips to Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, the First Lady will be focusing on the power and importance of education, both in her own life and in the lives of young people in both countries.

She will also be visiting important historical and cultural sites in China, and will [share](#) with students in the U.S. the stories of the students she meets in China, as well as interesting facts about China’s history and culture – emphasizing the importance of students learning from one

another globally. The First Lady is encouraging students and classrooms across the U.S. to follow her trip by [signing up](#) for updates throughout the visit. View the First Lady's message to students [here](#).

[PBS LearningMedia](#) and Discovery Education will offer engagement opportunities for young people surrounding the trip, along with resources available for U.S. classrooms that explore the culture, geography, current events, and people of China.

If you know of any high school students that want to get involved, have them sign up to join live webinars and opportunities to ask questions that will be answered by the first lady.

### **From other federal agencies**

#### **12. U.S. Department of Labor awarding grants for education of disadvantaged youth**

The U.S. Department of Labor will award YouthBuild grants to organizations to oversee the provision of education, occupational skills training, and employment services to disadvantaged youth in their communities while performing meaningful work and service. The program addresses affordable housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership development. The application deadline is April 22. For more information, click [here](#).

### **From other organizations**

### **13. College Board seeking nominations for Guidance and Admission Assembly Council**

The College Board is seeking nominations for two member positions on the Guidance and Admission Assembly Council. The committee is in search of experienced professionals who are knowledgeable about College Board programs and services. Individuals who have been active volunteers in College Board regional activities might be particularly well qualified for nomination. Information about the council and nomination forms are available [here](#). The nomination deadline is **April 22**.

### **14. ResilientKids to hold workshop on mindfulness**

A Rhode Island nonprofit, ResilientKids, is working with 1,300 students in nine Rhode Island public schools, most of them in high-need districts, teaching mindfulness and yoga as part of the school day. Students and teachers report excellent results - increased focus, reduced stress, fewer behavioral referrals.

ResilientKids is offering a workshop for teachers, principals, social workers, parents, guidance counselors, psychologists, and school nurses, featuring two national leaders in mindfulness in education. The workshop has two goals: explore the concept of mindfulness and how it can be applied to support adults working in your school, and engage in hands-on learning about mindfulness concepts and techniques.

The [workshop](#) will take place on Friday, **April 11**, from 8 a.m. to noon, at the Squantum Association, 947 Veterans Memorial Parkway, East Providence.

To learn more about ResilientKids, see:

<http://www.resilientkids.org>

**15. Boston Globe offers classroom materials to Rhode Island educators**

Please see this message from The Boston Globe:

[The Boston Globe News in Education \(NIE\) program](#) is pleased to extend an exciting offer to Rhode Island educators and their students.

Thanks to the generosity of private donors and corporate sponsors, Boston Globe NIE digital classroom subscriptions and educational resources are available free of charge to Rhode Island teachers in kindergarten through grade 12.

Teachers can register for their free Globe NIE subscriptions at:

<http://nieonline.com/bostonglobe/order.cfm>.

The registration process is quick and easy. Once registered, teachers and their students will have 24/7 access to the following:

- The Boston Globe e-paper, which includes translation into 12 languages and the ability to listen to individual articles
- BostonGlobe.com, which includes archived articles from 1872 to present.

In addition to their NIE subscriptions, teachers will have full access to Boston Globe NIE Common Core lesson plans, a weekly Boston Globe news quiz and newsletter, daily science webcasts, a Words in the News vocabulary quiz generated by grade level, a caption contest for editorial cartoons, and much more.

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

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

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, April 11, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. RIDE prepares [ESEA Flexibility Request](#) renewal application
2. RIDE participates in [settlement agreement](#) with U.S. Department of Justice regarding students, adults with disabilities
3. [NECAP retest](#) results to be ready this month

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

***Assessments:***

4. [NECAP Science](#) testing to begin on May 5

***Health and Safety:***

5. Annual [School Health Report](#) forms to be posted Monday, due **June 20 – Action Item**

***Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge:***

6. [Exceed website](#) launched; schools, programs eligible to apply to participate in BrightStars

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

7. [Grants](#) available for school counseling, turnaround-school leaders

8. U.S. Department of Education posts materials on parent, community [engagement](#)

### **From other state agencies**

9. [Governor's Workforce Board](#) to issue grants for partnerships between employers and education providers

### **From other organizations**

10. Brown University math institute to run [math day camp](#) for high-school girls
  11. Rhode Island Bar Association develops lessons, schedules essay contest to mark [Rhode Island Law Day](#)
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### **Action Item Calendar**

- April 25: [NECAP Science](#) testing schedules due  
April 28: Selection of [induction model](#) due  
May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due  
June 20: School Health Reports due (see [below](#))
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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. RIDE prepares ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application**

As you may know, RIDE is engaged in the process of applying for a renewal of the ESEA Flexibility Request, which the U.S. Department of Education initially approved in May 2012. This approved request allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability. Under our previous system, we classified schools based almost entirely on the percentage of students who attained proficiency on state assessments. The current system includes many additional measures, including progress toward goals, growth over time, percent of students attaining proficiency with distinction, closing achievement gaps, and graduation rates. Our current system also provides schools identified for intervention with the autonomy to select interventions that respond to their context and their needs.

To earn approval for our renewal request, we need to make some revisions to our classification system, largely because of the transition from NECAP to PARCC assessments. This transition requires us to rethink how we can measure progress toward goals and annual growth as factors within our accountability system.

Over the past month, we have discussed our renewal request in several forums, and we will continue our outreach efforts over the course of the next several weeks. We will draw on what we've heard and learned from teachers, school leaders, parents, and community organizations as we work to complete our renewal request.

## **2. RIDE participates in settlement agreement with U.S. Department of Justice regarding students, adults with disabilities**

RIDE was glad to be a part of the news conference on Tuesday regarding the settlement agreement that Rhode Island has signed with the U.S. Department of Justice. We will continue to work with you and your team to ensure that students with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their family members are involved in designing educational plans. Our shared goals are to see that students with intellectual or developmental disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment, as appropriate for their educational needs, and that these students receive the necessary instruction and support to prepare them for careers that will be challenging and fulfilling, for further career preparation and training during their adulthood, and to live as independently as possible.

## **3. NECAP retest results to be ready this month**

We have received some good news: The results of the 2014 NECAP retest will be available this month, which is sooner than we had anticipated. We will let you know when you will be able to access the scores from your LEA through our e-ride system. I am pleased that Measured Progress and our assessment team have worked to expedite this process.

**From RIDE**

***Assessments:***

## **4. NECAP Science testing to begin on May 5**

The NECAP Science testing window this year is **May 5 – 22**. All testing—including accommodations and make-up testing—*must* be completed by May 22. In planning your assessment schedule, you should take into consideration religious holidays and local events that may affect students' ability to participate. It is important that you allow ample time for make-up test sessions for those students who are absent for any reason (including absences for religious holidays) during regularly scheduled testing dates.

Principals and test coordinators are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all eligible students are tested. Therefore, you and your staff members must:

- ensure that parents and guardians are aware of the purpose of the assessment and that they have access to your NECAP testing schedule in advance so that they can plan accordingly;
- strongly discourage parents and guardians from planning any vacations or other activities that would prevent their children from testing with their peers during scheduled test-administration days;
- ensure that parents and guardians are aware that their children must make up any testing they missed while absent and that all make-up testing must be completed no later than May 22; and
- encourage parents and guardians to contact the principal, test coordinator, or teacher if their children will be absent during testing so that schools can arrange for make-up testing.

During the testing period, please encourage students to get plenty of rest, to eat a good breakfast on the day of testing, and to

perform at their very best so that we all can take pride in the accomplishments of our students and their teachers!

***Health and Safety:***

**5. Annual School Health Report forms to be posted Monday, due June 20 – Action Item**

The *Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs*, Section 2.5, require all LEAs and nonpublic-school authorities to submit to the Commissioner of Education and to the Director of Health on an annual basis a report pertaining to the school or district health program. The Annual School Health Report provides a standardized template to fulfill this reporting requirement and allows RIDE and the Department of Health to monitor school and district compliance with school health-related statutes, regulations, and protocols that ensure the health and safety of students and staff at all Rhode Island schools.

To ensure compliance with school health and safety statutes and regulations and to align with the beginning of each academic school year, this Annual School Health Report will apply to the school years 2013-14 and 2014-15. All future annual reports must be submitted prior to each school year.

The Annual School Health Report template will be available through eRIDE on Monday (April 14). You will receive an e-mail notification from RIDE when the report is open for completion and submission via eRIDE. The reports are due on **June 20**.

For a [preview](#) of the Annual School Health Report and for assistance in understanding what will be required, please see the

[Annual School Health Report Tutorial](#) and [Guidance/Q&A document](#).

***Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge:***

**6. Exceed website launched; schools, programs eligible to apply to participate in BrightStars**

The Exceed [website](#) has launched! Exceed is the new name for the Rhode Island cross-departmental initiative to implement the work of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. The name conveys the commitment of all of those in our early learning community who are working to help ensure that all of our young children have the opportunity to soar. Exceed is one of the key initiatives supporting the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, which was formed in 2010 to advise on the development of sustainable, high-quality systems of early-childhood education and care in Rhode Island.

Educators in our public schools can support outcomes for young children by understanding the quality of their early-childhood classrooms and by developing and implementing best practices. BrightStars is the first step. Last month, 11 public-school early-childhood programs applied to BrightStars. These applicants will have access to grants of up to \$30,000, and they will have access to technical assistance to improve the quality of their programs. All early-childhood programs in public schools are eligible to join BrightStars.

If you would like more information or if you would like someone to come and speak with your team about Exceed, please contact Melissa Emidy, at [Melissa.emidy@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Melissa.emidy@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8165.

## From the U.S. Department of Education

### **7. Grants available for school counseling, turnaround-school leaders**

The U.S. Department of Education is currently seeking applications for the [Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program](#) and the [Turnaround School Leaders Program](#). The school-counseling program provides funding to districts to establish or expand school-counseling programs, with special consideration given to applicants that can: demonstrate the greatest need for counseling services in the schools to be served, propose the most innovative and promising approaches, and show the greatest potential for replication and dissemination. Applications are due **April 28**. The school-leadership program supports projects to develop and implement or enhance and implement a critical-leadership pipeline that selects, prepares, places, supports, and retains school leaders for School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools or SIG-eligible schools. Applications are due **May 23**.

### **8. U.S. Department of Education posts materials on parent, community engagement**

The U.S. Department of Education is proud to release a framework for schools and their broader communities to build parent and community engagement. Across the nation, less than a quarter of residents are 18 years old or younger, and everyone has a responsibility for helping schools succeed. The [Dual Capacity framework](#) – a process used to teach staff to effectively engage parents and for parents to work successfully with the schools to increase student achievement – provides a model that schools and districts can use to build the type of effective community

engagement that will make schools the center of communities ([web page](#), with blog post, frequently asked questions, and video).

### **From other state agencies**

#### **9. Governor's Workforce Board to issue grants for partnerships between employers and education providers**

Please see this message from the Governor's Workforce Board:

The Governor's Workforce Board is pleased to issue a Request for Proposals for a second round of funding of up to \$1.75 million to support innovative partnerships between employers and education and training providers that will provide work-readiness, skills training, experiential learning, and career pathways to address the workforce needs of Rhode Island employers and increase the employability of students, out-of-school youth, and unemployed adults. Awards are anticipated to range from \$80,000 to \$200,000.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to attend a bidders' conference on **Wednesday** (April 16), from 10 - 11:30 a.m., at the Department of Labor & Training, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Cranston. Pre-register by contacting Amelia Roberts, at 462-8864 or [Amelia.Roberts@dlt.ri.gov](mailto:Amelia.Roberts@dlt.ri.gov).

For a copy of the Request for Proposals, click below:

- [MS Word Version](#)
- [Pdf Version](#)

For a copy of an Excel version of the required Outcome Targets form, [click here](#).

### **From other organizations**

#### **10. Brown University math institute to run math day camp for high-school girls**

Please see this message from Brown University, and feel free to share this message with high-school mathematics teachers:

The Brown University Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics ([ICERM](#)) has scheduled GirlsGetMath, a math day camp for 25 Providence-area high-school girls.

This five-day, non-residential mathematics program is open girls who will have just completed either grade 9 or grade 10 by July.

[GirlsGetMath](#) will encourage these young women to explore, and will invite them to excel in, the mathematical sciences. Accomplished professional women, enthusiastic about serving as career models as well as scientific mentors, will lead the program. Potential topics include: cryptography, the mathematics of voting, image processing, prime numbers and factoring, and fractals.

The goals of the program are:

- to show high-school girls that the study of mathematics can be exciting, beautiful, and useful;

- to build confidence in students' mathematical knowledge through engaging and expert mathematical instruction;
- to introduce high-school students to a variety of career opportunities in which sophisticated mathematical ability plays a key role;
- to emphasize the strategic role mathematics plays for success in STEM careers;
- to provide the participants with a support group and expert mentors who are successful undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals from the STEM workforce; and
- to have a positive influence on the way students view their mathematical interest and ability.

Tuition is \$100 (lunch included). Generous financial aid is available.

The program website and application details can be found here:

<http://icerm.brown.edu/girlsgetmath2014/>

Application deadline: **May 15**

The selection committee will review all applications after the May 15 deadline. Accepted students without 100-percent financial aid will receive information on how to pay the tuition in their acceptance letter.

**11. Rhode Island Bar Association develops lessons, schedules essay contest to mark Rhode Island Law Day**

The Rhode Island Bar Association notes that the 2014 Rhode Island Law Day will take place on May 2. The association has developed some topics for schools to use to meet the educational goals for Law Day. For information on classroom-program lessons and on the Rhode Island Law Day essay contest, go to:

<https://www.ribar.com/For%20the%20Public/Law%20Related%20Education/2014lawday.aspx>

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

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

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo  
Friday, April 18, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. LEAs can opt for [cyclical evaluation](#) model
2. LEAs receive 2014 [NECAP retest](#) results
3. RIDE schedules webinars on [ESEA Flexibility](#) Request
4. Mount Pleasant, Ponaganset leaders selected as [principals of the year](#)
5. Met School teacher to be honored for teaching [entrepreneurship](#)

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

***Assessments:***

6. Deadline for requesting student exemption from [NECAP Science](#) testing is **May 23**
7. Second testing window for the grade-8 [technology assessment](#) to open **April 28**

***Educator Certification:***

8. RIDE seeks public comments on [new tests](#) for educator certification in two areas

**Grants and awards:**

9. RIDE awards \$2.9 million in grants for [21<sup>st</sup>-Century Community Learning Centers](#)

**From other organizations**

10. Highlander Institute to hold [blended-learning conference](#) on **May 3**

**Attachments to this Field Memo**

Cyclical Evaluation Model

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**Action Item Calendar**

- April 25: [NECAP Science](#) testing schedules due
  - April 28: Selection of [induction model](#) due
  - May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due
  - June 20: School [Health](#) Reports due
- 

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

## **1. LEAs can opt for cyclical evaluation model**

We all are proud of our ongoing work toward ensuring that we have excellent teachers in every classroom and excellent leaders in every school. Our commitment to educator evaluations that provide educators with valuable information to improve performance is a key part of this on-going initiative.

As you know, we have received a lot of input over the past year from teachers, from principals, and from you and your association encouraging us to consider approval of a cyclical model for teacher evaluations. Educators have expressed a strong desire to maintain a high-quality evaluation process that emphasizes improvement, but they have also expressed a serious concern about the capacity of our evaluators to conduct full-scale evaluations of every teacher each year, as our current design requires. Over the past few months, we have worked closely with both the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association and the Rhode Island Association of School Principals to design together a cyclical model for evaluations that could begin in the coming school year. We are pleased that we have identified cyclical options that will allow us to maintain our shared commitment to providing a high-quality evaluation system while easing some of the burden on practitioners.

Thanks to this work, next year you will be able to select from among a new set of several options so as to make the best choice for evaluations that meet the needs of your school community. In the coming school year, you may choose to fully evaluate all teachers, to continue with the differentiated model that we approved a year ago, or to implement the newly designed cyclical model. I have attached to this field memo a document (Cyclical Evaluation Model) that outlines the features of the cyclical model.

In the coming weeks, we will provide you with more details and guidance about the cyclical model and how to notify us as to which model you will use in your schools. I appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership with you and the leadership of your association to develop this option for your consideration.

## **2. LEAs receive 2014 NECAP retest results**

I am glad that we were able to provide you on Wednesday afternoon with the your students' results on the 2014 NECAP retake. I hope that your high-school team has been able to speak to as many students and families as possible before the April vacation. It's important that students who have met the state-assessment graduation get this information as soon as possible, and it's also important that students who have not yet met this graduation requirement review with your team their next steps toward earning a diploma. Here at RIDE, we continue to collect information about the status of students in the Class of 2014, and I plan to report next month to the Board of Education regarding how many students are eligible for graduation this spring and how many current seniors are pursuing other options, such as other approved assessments, waivers, or more time in school.

## **3. RIDE schedules webinars on ESEA Flexibility Request**

As I noted to you in last week's Field Memo, we are in the process of developing our application for renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability in 2012. In renewing our request, we intend to leave the accountability system largely unchanged, but we do have to make some changes because of our transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. We continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two

webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well.

- Tuesday, April 29, from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- Wednesday, April 30, from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interesting in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community.

#### **4. Mount Pleasant, Ponaganset leaders selected as principals of the year**

Congratulations to Patricia Marcotte, of the Ponaganset Middle School, in Foster-Glocester, and to Scott Sutherland, principal of Mount Pleasant High School, in Providence, on their selection by the Rhode Island Association of School Principals as Rhode Island 2014 principals of the year.

The association honored Patricia as the Middle School Principal of the Year, noting that parents appreciate how hard Patricia works to provide supports to students in need of extra help, that teachers are motivated by her depth of knowledge and her enthusiasm, and that administrators recognize how she is continually engaged with the other schools in her community to ensure smooth transitions for students entering middle school and for graduates moving on to Ponaganset High School.

The association honored Scott as the High School Principal of the Year, recognizing that he has served for more than 10 years as a

school administrator in Providence and that over the past two years he has “dramatically led the culture and climate transformation” at Mount Pleasant. The association noted that Scott has “led the transformation to ... establish a safe, welcoming environment [ and ] create a true professional learning community” at the school.

Thank you, Patricia and Scott, for the work you are doing for students and teachers in your schools and for the families in your communities!

### **5. Met School teacher to be honored for teaching entrepreneurship**

The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship will recognize Jodie Woodruff, of The Met School, in Providence, as one of the Global Enterprising Educators of 2014 at its annual Global Gala next week in Washington. The organization will honor Woodruff for establishing the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center at The Met, for setting up internships for her students, and for bringing entrepreneurs from the community into the school on a weekly basis. Congratulations to Jodie and to The Met on this recognition!

**From RIDE**

### ***Assessments:***

### **6. Deadline for requesting student exemption from NECAP Science testing is May 23**

All requests for state-approved special consideration or exemption from NECAP Science testing must be submitted online no later than **May 23**, via eRIDE, using the following link:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/SASC/>

We strongly encourage all requests for exemption to be submitted as soon as possible rather than at the end of the testing window. Early submission of these requests will allow you sufficient time to test the student if the request for exemption is denied.

As a reminder, *no* exemption request will be processed until a *signed copy* of the “Form 1: District Assurances Form” has been faxed to RIDE (222-3605).

As in previous years, when your and your testing coordinators log into eRIDE you will see the icon “NECAP/RIAA Exemption Requests,” and you can use this icon to access the necessary online forms.

In addition, the “State-Approved Special Considerations for Statewide Assessments: Guidelines & Forms” document has been updated for the current school year to outline the policies and procedures for requesting student exemptions. This document is available on the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/NECAPAssessment/NECAPExemptions.aspx>

The document is also available on the eRIDE exemptions page, at:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/SASC/>

It is very important that you review this guidance document before attempting to submit requests through eRIDE. If you have any questions about NECAP Science exemptions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (phone: 222-8494; e-mail: [Kevon.Tucker-Seeley@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Kevon.Tucker-Seeley@ride.ri.gov)).

## **7. Second testing window for the grade-8 technology assessment to open April 28**

The second testing window for the grade-8 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills technology assessment opens right after April vacation, from **April 28 to May 23**. All grade-8 students who did not take the assessment during the first window must take the assessment during this window. A refresher webinar is being offered for those proctors who would like to brush up on details for administering the assessment. Proctors may register for one of the refresher webinars, which we will offer on Wednesday, April 30:

- [Refresher Webinar – Wed., April 30<sup>th</sup> – 8:00 AM](#); or
- [Refresher Webinar – Wed., April 30<sup>th</sup> – 3:00 PM](#)

A reports-overview webinar will be held on June 4, after all students have completed the assessment for the year. This webinar will help proctors retrieve the appropriate level of student, class, school, and district reports; read and interpret the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills data contained in the reports; and apply the results to instructional or programmatic decision-making. Details for registering for the Reports Overview webinar will be sent directly to proctors.

More information about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills assessment can be found on the [RIDE web site](#).

***Educator Certification:***

**8. RIDE seeks public comments on new tests for educator certification in two areas**

ETS, the testing company whose assessments we use for educator certification, is adding new tests and phasing out older tests. There are currently two tests (speech-language pathology and middle-school science) that have been regenerated; these changes will affect certification requirements in Rhode Island. We are seeking public comment from the education community and the general public on the proposed redesigned certification tests and on the passing scores for initial educator certification in the areas of speech-language pathology and middle-school science. To provide comments on the proposed certification tests and passing scores, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Certification-Updates>.

If you have any questions about these new assessments, please feel free to contact Hilda Potrzeba, at [hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov](mailto:hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8891.

***Grants and awards:***

**9. RIDE awards \$2.9 million in grants for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Community Learning Centers**

RIDE has awarded \$2,926,223 in grants to run school-linked afterschool and summer programs, as part of the federally funded 21st-Century Community Learning Centers initiative.

We have awarded grants to:

- AS220 – \$88,200
- The Boys & Girls Club of East Providence – \$163,353
- The Boys & Girls Club of Providence – \$105,000
- The Central Falls School District – 2 grants – \$240,350
- The Cranston Public Schools – 2 grants – \$235,589
- The East Bay Community Action Program – \$61,000
- The Highlander Institute – \$135,000
- Inspiring Minds – \$149,000
- The Learning Community Charter School – \$105,000
- The Met School – \$100,000
- The Mt. Hope Learning Center – \$149,858
- Newport Community School – 2 grants – \$214,379
- The Paul Cuffee School – \$135,000
- The Pawtucket School Department – 2 grants – \$343,732
- The Swearer Center, at Brown University – \$141,762
- The Woonsocket Education Department – 2 grants – \$300,000
- The YMCA of Greater Providence – 2 grants – \$259,000

These grants are to provide before-school, afterschool, vacation-time, and summer programs for children and youth in high-poverty communities. The programs offer academic support, enrichment, recreation, and family-engagement services. RIDE awarded the grants through a competitive application process. With the addition of these grants, there will be 24 agencies in Rhode Island operating 21st-Century Community Learning Centers that serve a total of 53 schools.

RIDE administers the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers program and provides technical assistance and professional development to the grant recipients to ensure that the programs are of high quality, that they are linked to academic achievement, and that they are aligned to the state standards for afterschool programs.

### **From other organizations**

#### **10. Highlander Institute to hold blended-learning conference on May 3**

The Highlander Institute is hosting its third annual Blended Learning & Technology Conference on Saturday, May 3, at the URI Feinstein Campus, in Providence. Strands for both educators and administrators promise to inspire. The afternoon “unconference” will provide participants with the time and space to discuss topics that they are tackling in their schools. The conference keynote speaker will be Richard Culatta, director of the Office of Educational Technology for the U.S. Department of Education. His work focuses on leveraging technology to create personalized learning experiences for all students and on promoting increased connectivity to improve access to education and to make college more affordable. Culatta is passionate about accelerating innovation in education, with a particular interest in games for learning, personalized learning, and open education. Click here to [register for the Blended Learning and Technology Conference](#).

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

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

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, April 25, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. LEAs encouraged to communicate with, develop plans for seniors who have not yet met [graduation](#) requirements
2. RIDE nearing completion of [ESEA Flexibility](#) Request renewal application
3. East Greenwich, Providence high-school seniors named as 2014 [Presidential Scholar](#) semifinalists
4. Pell School, Greene School selected as 2014 [Green Ribbon Schools](#)
5. Woonsocket school complex recognized as [outstanding growth project](#)
6. Districts, schools win [state grants](#) for energy efficiency, library services
7. Highlander Institute invites educators to register for May 3 conference on [blended learning](#) and technology

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

***Assessments:***

8. [PARCC](#) testing schedules posted; PARCC can be used as end-of-course measure, juniors will take NECAP assessments in October

***Reports to RIDE:***

9. [School calendars](#) to be submitted to RIDE by **May 16** –  
***Action Item***

***Health and Safety:***

10. Principals must submit reports to RIDE after each  
[emergency drill](#)

***School Finance:***

11. RIDE updates calculations of [education aid](#) for Fiscal  
Year 2015

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

12. U.S. Department of Education announces new  
[Investing in Innovation](#) grants; applications due **June 24**
13. Education, Agriculture Secretaries encourage support  
for [summer meal programs](#)
14. U.S. Department of Education to develop plan to  
strengthen [teacher-preparation programs](#)
15. Resources available on prevention of [teen dating  
violence](#) and sexual assault

**From other state agencies**

16. [Manufacturing Workforce Summit](#) scheduled for **May 29**, pre-registration required
17. Adult Education Professional Development Center, Broadband Rhode Island announce plan to improve adult [digital literacy](#)

### **From other organizations**

18. Organization seeks host families for [exchange students](#)
19. Farmers Insurance launches program to [thank teachers](#), provide teachers with grants

### **Attachments to this Field Memo**

FY 2015 Formula Updates – April 2014

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### **Action Item Calendar**

**Today** (April 25): [NECAP Science](#) testing schedules due  
**Monday** (April 28): Selection of [induction model](#) due  
May 16: School calendars due (see [below](#))  
May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due  
June 20: School [Health](#) Reports due

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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. LEAs encouraged to communicate with, develop plans for seniors who have not yet met graduation requirements**

Last week, you received student results on the 2014 NECAP retake. The good news is that several hundred more students have attained at least partial proficiency or made significant growth, and these students have now fulfilled this component of our Diploma System. As we continue to collect more information from you and your colleagues, our team at RIDE is compiling the data and I will make a full report on students' progress toward graduation at next month's meeting of the Board of Education.

I hope that your high-school team was able to speak about the results to as many students and families as possible before the April vacation. As you continue to plan for current seniors who have not yet met this graduation requirement, it's important that students who have not yet met this graduation requirement review with your team their next steps toward earning a diploma. If you have any procedural questions regarding students pursuing other options, such as other approved assessments, waivers, or more time in school, please contact Cali Cornell ([cali.cornell@ride.ri.gov](mailto:cali.cornell@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8251), and of course I am always available to talk with you about these matters as well.

### **2. RIDE nearing completion of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application**

As the May 12 submission deadline approaches, we are completing the process of developing our application for renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement

our current system of school accountability in 2012. It has been very important to all of us at RIDE that we develop our renewal request in consultation with you and your colleagues, as well as with other school leaders, teachers, and community members. I want to thank you and your association for helping us with this process; we have been developing our renewal request based in part on input from a focus group that included several superintendents: Superintendents Auger, Barnes, Erinakes, Ricci, and Thies, as well as a head of a charter public school (Jeremy Chiapetta), and other school district leaders (Marco Andrade, Dennis Mullen, Lois Short, and Alan Tenreiro), and I want to thank all of the participants for their insights over the course of five meetings.

Overall, we intend to leave the accountability system largely unchanged, but we do have to make some changes because of our transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. I want to remind you, however, that we continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- **Tuesday** (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- **Wednesday** (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I once again invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community.

### **3. East Greenwich, Providence high-school seniors named as 2014 Presidential Scholar semifinalists**

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, at the U.S. Department of Education, has informed us that the program has selected three seniors in Rhode Island public high schools as 2014 Presidential Scholars semifinalists. Congratulations, to Alice Raynor, of Classical High School, in Providence, and to Heather Shen and Michelle Xiong, both of East Greenwich High School. The Presidential Scholar award is one of the highest honors in the country for high-school students. Alice, Heather, and Michelle are 565 semifinalists; over the next two months, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars will select about 140 of the semifinalists as 2014 Presidential Scholars.

### **4. Pell School, Greene School selected as 2014 Green Ribbon Schools**

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Education announced that two Rhode Island schools have won 2014 Green Ribbon School awards: the Claiborne Pell Elementary School, in Newport, and The Greene School, a charter public school in West Greenwich.

Green Ribbon Schools are recognized “for their exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways.”

The Pell School, which is lodged in a new facility that opened at the beginning this school year, was recognized for the many design features in the building (e.g., reflective roof materials, low-velocity ventilation system, optimal orientation for daylight) as well as for its environmental and outdoors program, such as the

Fitness Gram for all students and the garden-to-table initiative. The Greene School was honored in part because of its focus on environmental literacy: teachers deliver the majority of the curriculum through environmental topics, such as energy, biodiversity, and sustainable development; students learn through multidisciplinary “learning expeditions,” such as the 100 Mile Radius Dinner, which culminates in a meal prepared with local foods.

Across Rhode Island, many of our teachers and students are deeply engaged in exciting environmental projects, ranging from community gardens to energy audits to wildlife protection. The two schools that the U.S. Department of Education recognized represent some of the best ongoing work in our communities to teach schoolchildren about the world in which we live and to ensure that our school buildings are models of green design. Congratulations to the students, teachers, school leaders, and community members who have earned these awards!

### **5. Woonsocket school complex recognized as outstanding growth project**

Grow Smart Rhode Island has awarded a 2014 Smart Growth Award to the City of Woonsocket in recognition of the Woonsocket Middle School complex, which the organization has identified as one of our Outstanding Growth Projects in the state. “The newly developed Woonsocket Middle School complex is a remarkable example of far-sighted city planning,” Grow Smart Rhode Island notes in its citation. “Following a complicated clean-up of the site and of contaminated groundwater that had threatened the Blackstone River ... the city created a safe, state-of-the-art educational complex.” The school will receive its award at the Grow Smart Rhode Island summit next month.

Congratulations to the city and school leaders in Woonsocket who brought this project to fruition!

## **6. Districts, schools win state grants for energy efficiency, library services**

Three of our school districts and one high school have received Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative grants from the Office of Energy Resources. The Chariho Regional, East Greenwich, and Lincoln School Districts have received grants totaling \$538,000 for energy-efficient lighting upgrades, boiler replacements, and installation of controls for heating systems and fans. West Warwick High School received a grant to install a solar-voltaic system on its field house and ice rink. All of these investments will save money for the school districts by lowering energy costs and they will benefit our state by supporting renewable energy. I applaud the school leaders from Chariho, East Greenwich, Lincoln, and West Warwick for responding to this grant opportunity and for investing in energy efficiency.

Yesterday, the Office of Library Services awarded Library of Rhode Island grants to the Archie R. Cole Middle School, in East Greenwich, to enable students to create short promotional videos for fiction and nonfiction books, and to the Central Falls Public Library, to work with the Central Falls School Department and other organizations to design a media-education lab and to hold a summer camp that will teach digital literacy to grade-8 students. These both sound like exciting and important programs that will benefit Rhode Island middle-school students.

## **7. Highlander Institute invites educators to register for May 3 conference on blended learning and technology**

The Highlander Institute invites educators and all friends of education to attend its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Blended Learning & Technology Conference, on Saturday, May 3, from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at the University of Rhode Island Providence Feinstein Campus, Media Education Lab at the Harrington School, 80 Washington St. (the Shepard Building, which also houses our RIDE offices). Richard Culatta, the Director of the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education, will be the keynote speaker. The conference will include both a teacher “track” (Classroom Tools and Instruction) and an administrator “track” (Decision Points and Policies). The institute is particularly reaching out administrators who may wish to attend, as specific aspects of the program will be geared toward school and district leaders. If you or your assistant superintendent are interested in registering for this conference, please contact me directly and I will provide you with registration information. More details about the conference are available here:

<http://www.blendedlearningconference.com/>

### **From RIDE**

#### ***Assessments:***

- 8. PARCC testing schedules posted; PARCC can be used as end-of-course measure, juniors will take NECAP assessments in October**

Rhode Island schools will administer PARCC assessments for the first time during the coming school year (2014-15). Students in grades 3 through high school will be taking the assessments in English language arts and mathematics. The assessments are

divided into two components: a *Performance-Based Assessment* (PBA) component, administered about 75 percent of the way through the school year, and an *End-of-Year* (EOY) component that will be administered closer to the end of the year. The length of the testing window differs depending on whether students are taking the assessment on a computer or using paper and pencil. There will be a 20-day window for each component to schedule computer-based testing and a 10-day window for paper and pencil. The computer-based window will be longer in order to provide schools sufficient time to arrange a schedule for students using electronic devices. Next month, RIDE will ask LEAs to complete a survey indicating the number of paper-pencil and the number of online assessments you will administer in each school during the coming school year.

The design of the PARCC assessments supports their use as end-of-course assessments. As such, there are two testing windows for PARCC assessments that might be used as an end-of-course measure. These assessments include English I, English II, algebra I, geometry, integrated mathematics I, and integrated mathematics II. The first testing window (December and January) aligns with courses that are completed in the first half of a school year. This first testing window will be abbreviated in the coming school year (2014-15), and assessments will be offered only in a paper-and-pencil version. The second window will be in the spring. Three PARCC assessments – English III, algebra II, and integrated mathematics III – will neither be required nor paid for by the state as part of the Rhode Island assessment program. LEAs may decide to use these assessments at the local level.

The NECAP reading and mathematics assessments in grade 11 will be administered to all juniors in October of 2014. These assessments will be used to inform graduation requirements and

for high-school accountability. Seniors may also take the NECAP assessment in October, as appropriate, to inform graduation requirements. The testing window will be slightly shorter next year, with the goal of returning results before January. It is important to note that, in the coming school year, juniors do *not* have to take the PARCC assessments, even if they are enrolled in an algebra I, geometry, integrated mathematics I, or integrated mathematics II courses, although they may choose to do so.

We have posted the complete testing windows for the coming school year on our website, at:

[www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-schedule](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-schedule).

Please contact Phyllis Lynch ([phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov](mailto:phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov)) if you have any questions about the testing schedules for the coming school year.

***Reports to RIDE:***

**9. School calendars to be submitted to RIDE by May 16 –  
*Action Item***

This is a reminder that it is time for LEA data managers to submit 2014-15 calendars to RIDE. Data managers will be advised that calendars must be submitted using the e-ride system no later than Friday, May 16; RIDE no longer accepts hard copies of calendars. Please contact Mario Goncalves, at 222-8968 or [Mario.Goncalves@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Mario.Goncalves@ride.ri.gov), for assistance with this matter.

***Health and Safety:***

**10. Principals must submit reports to RIDE after each emergency drill**

This is a reminder that all emergency-drill information must be entered in eRIDE following the completion of each drill. This information is monitored by RIDE on a regular basis. The principal of each school is responsible for the successful implementation of the Rhode Island fire-safety statutes, including the timely and accurate reporting of emergency drills.

In accordance with state law ([§16-21-4](#), [§16-21-5](#)), all schools (public and nonpublic) in Rhode Island are required to perform 15 emergency drills that include fire, lockdown, and evacuation drills. At least one drill shall be conducted each month, and at least one out of every four must be obstructed drills. As part of the required 15 emergency drills, each school must conduct two evacuation drills and two lockdown drills. One lockdown drill shall occur in September and one in January.

You can access the “Health and Safety of Pupils” statutes on the Rhode Island General Assembly website, at:

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-21/16-21-4.HTM>

and

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-21/16-21-5.HTM>

***School Finance:***

## **11. RIDE updates calculations of education aid for Fiscal Year 2015**

As part of the funding-formula law, state education aid is based on data from one year prior to the year in which the state distributes the aid. Therefore, we must base Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 aid on enrollment and free- or reduced-price lunch data from FY 2014. To fulfill this mandate, we collected data on student enrollments and free- or reduced-price lunch status from the beginning of the current school year through last month. We then annualized this information to reflect a full year. We also adjusted the calculations to account for the results of the charter-public-school lotteries held last month. Remember that the funding formula spreads all changes over the remaining years of the transition: 4 years for those LEAs that currently receive insufficient state funding and 7 years for those LEAs that currently receive an excess of state funding. See the attached analysis (FY 2015 Formula Updates – April 2014) for the changes by LEA.

Please note that we have forwarded this data to the Governor's Office and to the General Assembly for their consideration. No changes will go into effect until the General Assembly passes, and Governor Chafee signs, the annual appropriations bill.

If you have any questions about these aid calculations, please contact Kristen Cole, at 222-4681 or [kristen.cole@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kristen.cole@ride.ri.gov).

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

## **12. Education, Agriculture Secretaries encourage support for summer meal programs**

Please see this letter from Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture:

Dear Colleague:

Children are America's greatest treasure, and ensuring they have the proper nutrition to learn, grow up healthy, and reach their full potential is one of our most important duties as community members, educators, and leaders. Nearly 50 years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared the War on Poverty, a set of initiatives that continues to expand educational opportunities, secure economic equality, and provide nutritious meals to those in need. Our nation has a long and impressive history of ensuring that its needy citizens, especially children, have enough food in order to thrive. Your leadership can help to ensure that those same children do not go hungry in your community this summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) summer meal programs that are available to schools include the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). These programs operate in partnership with the federal government, state agencies, and local organizations to serve free meals to children age 18 years and younger. The USDA provides reimbursement for meals; state agencies administer the program; and local organizations, including schools, nonprofits, parks and recreation departments, libraries, and faith-based groups serve the meals. Summer meals programs are critical to children in need because we know that only a portion of students participate in summer meal programs compared with those who participate during the school year. During the 2012-13 school year,

approximately 21-million children were served free and reduced-price meals while only approximately 3.5-million children participated in a meal program during the summer of 2013.

We need your leadership and assistance to help feed hungry children this coming summer. There are many ways you can assist, but, specifically, you can:

*Provide children in your community with meals at your schools this summer.* Local schools are the best sites for summer feeding efforts. Children and parents are familiar with local schools, and schools are known for providing nutritious food in a safe environment. Even if your school will not be offering summer school, if it is located in a low-income area it can be a summer feeding site and fill that important meal gap for students so that they are ready to learn when they return to school in the fall.

*Ask teachers and staff in your schools to share information about nearby summer meal sites, whether the site is at your school or at other locations in your community.* School leaders can find local feeding sites by calling (866) 3-HUNGRY or (877) 8-HAMBRE or by visiting [www.whyhunger.org/findfood](http://www.whyhunger.org/findfood). Schools communicate regularly and effectively with the families of children in your community. You can help reach out and connect these families with summer meals before the school year ends and continue to make a difference in the lives of your students throughout the summer.

*Be a champion in your community.* As a recognized leader, you have many opportunities to meet with other

community leaders and organizations that have an interest in ensuring children have resources to succeed. Take the time to discuss summer meals programs and how others can get involved by becoming a sponsor or site that serves meals.

To learn more about the USDA summer meal programs visit:

[www.summerfood.usda.gov](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov).

In addition, the Food and Nutrition Service regional office staff is available to provide technical assistance and answer any questions you may have on USDA summer meal programs at the following link:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>.

Thank you, as always, for your dedication and commitment to our children. By working together, we can be sure our children have the food and nutrition needed to continue to grow and succeed.

**13. U.S. Department of Education announces new Investing in Innovation grants; applications due June 24**

The U.S. Department of Education has announced the start of the 2014 grant competition for the [Investing in Innovation \(i3\)](#) program's Scale-up and Validation categories. This competition will continue the U.S. Department of Education investments in promising strategies that can help close achievement gaps and improve educational outcomes for our neediest students.

The i3 program aims to develop and expand practices that accelerate student achievement and prepare students to succeed in college and in their careers. As in years past, the program includes three grant categories: Development, Validation and Scale-up. This year, school districts and nonprofit organizations, in partnership with districts or schools, are eligible to compete for nearly \$135 million across all three categories. The maximum grant amount available in each category is based on the evidence of effectiveness.

In March, the U.S. Department of Education announced the i3 Development competition for grants of up to \$3 million, and received nearly 400 applications. For this competition, Validation grants will provide up to \$12 million to fund projects with moderate evidence of effectiveness. Scale-up grants will provide up to \$20 million to fund projects with strong evidence of effectiveness and enable expansion across the country. All i3 projects conduct an independent evaluation to identify what works in education.

The [Notices Inviting Applications](#) are published in the Federal Register, and applications for the Scale-up and Validation grants are due **June 24**. To access the notices for the categories, visit:

*Scale-up*

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-04-23/pdf/2014-09263.pdf>

*Validation*

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-04-23/pdf/2014-09262.pdf>

To learn more about the Investing in Innovation Fund, visit:

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

**14. U.S. Department of Education to develop plan to strengthen teacher-preparation programs**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

Research confirms that the most important factor in a student's success in school is a strong teacher. However, almost two-thirds of new teachers report that their teacher-preparation program left them unprepared for the realities of the classroom. Moreover, for decades, institutions that prepare teachers have lacked the feedback needed to identify their strengths and weaknesses and had little information on where program graduates go to teach, how long they stay, and how they perform in the classroom.

Today, President Obama directed the U.S. Department of Education to lay out a plan to strengthen America's teacher-preparation programs for public discussion by this summer and to move forward on schedule to publish a final rule within the next year. The Administration will encourage and support states in developing systems that recognize excellence and provide all programs with information to help them improve while holding them accountable for how well they prepare teachers to succeed in today's classrooms and throughout their careers.

Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education plan will:

- build on state systems and efforts and the progress in the field to encourage all states to develop their own meaningful systems to identify high- and low-performing teacher-preparation programs across all kinds of programs, not just those based in colleges and universities;
- ask states to move away from current input-focused reporting requirements, streamline the current data requirements, incorporate more meaningful outcomes, and improve the availability of relevant information on teacher preparation; and
- rely on state-developed program ratings of preparation programs to determine program eligibility for [TEACH grants](#), which are available to students who are planning to become teachers in a high-need field in a low-income school.

## **15. Resources available on prevention of teen dating violence and sexual assault**

Please see this message from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

Every year, about 1 in 10 American teenagers experiences physical violence at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend, and many others are sexually and emotionally abused. The U.S. Department of Education is dedicated to working with students, families, educators, and communities to prevent abuse and support survivors. A new [compilation of resources](#) provides information to support schools and communities in their efforts to create safe, healthy learning environments and to identify, investigate, and remedy teen dating violence and sexual assault. (Note: This month is

National Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month; see [blog post](#).)

### **From other state agencies**

#### **16. Manufacturing Workforce Summit scheduled for May 29, pre-registration required**

On May 29, the Governor's Workforce Board, the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association, and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Service will hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Manufacturing Workforce Summit: Engineering the Manufacturing Talent Pipeline. The summit will run from 8 to 10:30 a.m., at the Providence Marriott Downtown, 1 Orms St. The event is free, but [pre-registration](#) is required by **May 22**.

#### **17. Adult Education Professional Development Center, Broadband Rhode Island announce plan to improve adult digital literacy**

The Rhode Island Adult Education Professional Development Center and Broadband Rhode Island have announced the launch of an agreement to develop and implement a plan for long-term sustainability of the Broadband Rhode Island Digital Literacy Project to improve adult Internet usage across the state. As part of the federally funded initiative, Broadband Rhode Island created a digital literacy program for adults, including curriculum and instructor training and established a thriving network of more than 200 volunteer and professional digital literacy trainers whose efforts target the state's disadvantaged populations. To date,

these instructors delivered digital literacy training to almost 1,000 adults through libraries, public housing authorities, adult education organizations, and senior centers.

The Professional Development Center and Broadband Rhode Island have outlined plans for numerous activities throughout this year that are designed to strengthen the Digital Literacy Project. The two organizations will work in partnership to develop a sustainable digital literacy trainer network, through adult education organizations and libraries, that does not rely solely on volunteers.

The work plan for 2014 also includes development of a recognized standard for digital literacy outcomes and establishment of criteria for evaluating adult learners' readiness to apply digital literacy skills to tasks such as participating in distance learning and completing essential life skills tasks online.

For the complete news release, see:

[http://broadband.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Public/RIAEPDC\\_BBRI\\_final\\_2.pdf](http://broadband.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Public/RIAEPDC_BBRI_final_2.pdf)

### **From other organizations**

#### **18. Organization seeks host families for exchange students**

The Council for Educational Travel USA is seeking host families who would welcome exchange students who will be arriving in Rhode Island in August. Each exchange student will have a minimum of three years of English-language instruction, and they

will carry health and accident insurance. The Rhode Island coordinator is Michelle Blanding, at [angelsandchins@aol.com](mailto:angelsandchins@aol.com). More information about the program is available at [www.cetusa.org](http://www.cetusa.org).

**19. Farmers Insurance launches program to thank teachers, provide teachers with grants**

Farmers Insurance has launched a Thank a Million Teachers campaign to recognize and thank teachers across the nation for the difference they make in our children's lives in thousands of classrooms every day. There are two components to the program; the first is the ability to thank a deserving teacher and the second is the opportunity for those "thanked" to apply for a \$2,500 grant.

Information about the program is available here:

[www.thankamillionteachers.com](http://www.thankamillionteachers.com).

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

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

**Commissioner's Field Memo Alert**  
**Tuesday, April 29, 2014**

**RIDE schedules webinars on ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application; seeks public comment – *Reminder***

As I noted to you in Friday's Field Memo, we are completing the process of developing our application for one-year renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability in 2012. It has been very important to all of us at RIDE that we develop our renewal request in consultation with you and your colleagues, as well as with other school leaders, teachers, and community members.

I want to remind you that we continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- **Today** (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- **Tomorrow** (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I once again invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community. For those unable to participate, I am attaching to this Field Memo Alert the PowerPoint presentation that we will use during the webinars. As noted on the last slide, we have created an e-mail address specifically to receive comment on our renewal application. Please send any feedback or comments to us at:

[ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov)



## Attachment 2: Comments on request from LEAs

## NOTES FROM 2/24/14 ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

### **Which aspects of the system need to be discussed and considered more carefully in 2014-2015?**

Investigate other measures, other than our assessment, to make clarification.

Review what other states are using in softer measures, rather than just one assessment.

These are qualities of schools that are not re-measured – how do we do this? – schools need to be visited – let's look at other states.

How much variability has there been in school-based accountability? (last 2 years?)

Weigh seniority by how long they have been at school/district.

Don't combine Reading Math at HS – when PARCC implemented adjust the 2010 baseline to determine target, especially when demographic of school has changed (Rolling average?)

Use multiple years of NECAP Data (Rolling Average) for accountability.

Application to be "connected" based on minimum score.

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w/\$Prize

Study state schools w/50% 2's vs. 2/50%, 1's should be scored differently.

Weigh kids difficulty based on number of years at school and/or system, e.g. 1 yr. kid = .5, 2yr. kid = .75, 3 yr. kid = 1.00

Sub-groups in schools – we should look at how they perform vs. the state of that group (not just whites in LEA).

### **What questions do you have about school accountability and graduation requirements or with educator evaluation?**

Can we have a metric for having very few students at level 1?

What is the percentage of students with IEPs in each LEA?

What is the overlap between PRG & consolidated group in urban districts?

### **What features of the accountability system work well and which need re-examination?**

Re-examine

Reduce the jumps we see in School Clarification by tracking a cohort of students.

Absolute % Proficient and Percent with distinction add up to 35% which directly benefit high SES schools over low SES.

60% HS Graduation rate as well.

Effect of growth data on teacher effectiveness as population between schools change.

From: Castaneda, Andrea  
Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 12:14 PM  
To: Goho, Joe  
Cc: Snider, Mary Ann; Krieger, Elliot  
Subject: ESEA waiver

Joe -

Thank you for your thoughtful comments on our ESEA waiver extension request. I want to make myself available to talk about your thoughts in greater detail. I also want to clarify a technical detail around the scope of this federal extension opportunity. US Ed is providing states with the opportunity to extend already-approved waivers for a period limited to the 14-15 school year. Consequently, we can't use this extension to contemplate a multi-year moratorium on school accountability.

Currently, Rhode Island is one of only three states (of which I know) that are using the extension opportunity to propose a pause in school classifications. We are making this proposal in the spirit you share in your email: the pursuit of time to fully understand the implications of the PARCC transition.

We welcome extensive engagement in the design of the accountability system that follows our ESEA waiver. While the exact timeline on that is not yet clear (at a federal level), we would be pleased to add you to the invitation list.

Thanks for your time and thought on this matter. Please feel free to call me at 580-5989 if you want to talk more.

Andrea

## Attachment 3: Notice to the public

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Elliot Krieger, Communications – (401) 222-8471  
Embargo until: Immediate release – April 28, 2014

### **RIDE schedules webinars on proposed changes to classification system**

The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) is completing the process of developing an application for renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, under which, in 2012, the U.S. Department of Education allowed RIDE to implement the current system of school [classifications](#) and accountability. Under this system, RIDE classifies schools based on:

- **Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?
- **Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?
- **Participation:** How many students take the state assessments?
- **Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners?
- **Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?
- **Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?
- **Improvement (high schools):** Is the school improving annually?
- **Graduation (high schools):** Is the school reaching its graduation-rate goals?

Using these measures, RIDE places each school into one of six classifications: Commended, Leading, Typical, Warning, Focus, or Priority.

Overall, RIDE intends to leave the classifications and accountability system largely unchanged, but RIDE does have to make some technical changes because of the transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. RIDE continues to seek input on the renewal application, and to that end RIDE has scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- **Tuesday** (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- **Wednesday** (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.) All are invited to join either webinar.

###

**Telephone** 401-222-4600 **Fax** 401-222-6178 **TTY** 800-745-5555 **Voice** 800-745-6575

The R.I. Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, religion, national origin, or disability.



## **Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

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Request for Renewal of Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility



## Background

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In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education offered states flexibility from some requirements of ESEA (aka NCLB).

In May 2012, the U.S. Department of Education approved the Rhode Island request for flexibility, resulting in a new system of recognition, accountability and support for our public schools and educators.



## Our Former Accountability System

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School performance was measured on a “one size fits all” approach based solely on percent of students proficient by grade level; whole school; and by student groups.

The only other measures considered were attendance rate; and graduation rate.

Despite the fact that schools faced different numbers of targets based on their student diversity, missing any target triggered the same consequences.



## ESEA Waiver Requires Adherence to Four Principles

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1. Adoption of College and Career Ready Standards and Assessment for All Students
2. State-Developed, Differentiated Systems of Recognition, Accountability and Support
3. Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership through Educator Evaluation
4. Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden



# School Classifications

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We base school classifications on a Composite Index Score that includes the following elements:

**Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?

**Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?

**Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students?

**Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?

**Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?

**Improvement (high schools):** Is the school improving annually?

**Graduation (high schools):** Are all students ready for success?



# Our New Accountability System

<b>ESEA Flexibility Design Weights</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Elementary / Middle Schools</b>	<b>High Schools</b>
Absolute Percent Proficient	All Students	30	30
Progress to 2017 Target	All Students	10	10
Subgroup Performance Gaps against Performance Reference Group	Minority+FRL	30	30
	IEP+LEP		
Percent of Tested Students in Distinction Level	All Students	5	5
Growth	All Students	25	0
	Minority+FRL		
	IEP+LEP		
HS Graduation Rates	All Students		20
HS Scaled Score Change	All Students		5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



# Recognition

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The highest-performing schools are recognized as:

Leading Schools; or

Commended Schools.



# Accountability

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Classification system: Each school is classified based on composite index score.

Diagnostic screens: RIDE has developed web-based tools for analysis of results.

RIDE helps identify shortcomings and achievements at each school.



## Support

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For schools identified as “Priority” and “Focus;”  
Districts select interventions that respond to:

their context; and  
their needs.

RIDE ensures that interventions are supported  
by available data; approves a school reform  
plan; and monitors interventions over time.



# Flexibility Request Renewal

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## Few Changes from Initial Request

For the most part, our system of Recognition, Accountability, and Support will remain the same as the approved request of 2012.

However:

We need to make some changes in our system because of transition from NECAP to PARCC assessments.



## School Classifications: Current School Year

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RIDE will announce school classifications around June 1, 2014.

RIDE will continue to calculate and publish Composite Index Scores for all schools.

RIDE will identify new Warning, Typical, Leading, and Commended schools, using the same rules and criteria in place since 2012.

However:

RIDE will identify no new Priority or Focus schools.



## School Classifications: 2014 – 2015 School Year

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Pending approval from the U.S. Department of Education:

- RIDE will announce new Composite Index Scores for all schools in December 2015.
- “Progress to target” scores will not be available for elementary and middle schools so those 10 points will be distributed across the remaining metrics for the 2014 - 2015 school year only.
- RIDE will calculate and publish composite index scores based on results of PARCC assessments (for elementary and middle schools) and grade11 NECAP assessments (for high schools).
- RIDE will label *no new* schools as Priority, Focus, Warning, Typical, or Leading, but Priority and Focus schools will retain their classification.
- RIDE will identify *only* Commended schools, using the rules and criteria in place since 2012.



## Accountability – Going Forward

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During the 2014-15 school year, RIDE will analyze assessment data and will engage with field to make decisions about accountability going forward, particularly:

- using data from PARCC assessments to set new annual measurable objectives for all schools; and
- setting new cut scores for all schools to measure progress toward targets and closing achievement gaps.



## **Educator Evaluation: 2014 – 2015 School Year**

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Pending approval from the U.S. Department of Education:

- The Rhode Island Growth Model will be used to measure student learning for teachers beginning in the 2016 – 2017 school year.
- Growth model data will continue to be made available to teachers and administrators for the purposes of improving student learning.
- Student Learning Objective data will continue to be included in teachers' summative ratings in 2014 – 2015.



# Contacts and More Information

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Please send questions and comments to:

[ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov)

For more information on the Rhode Island system for school classifications and accountability or to see a copy of this presentation, visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/Accountability/SchoolClassifications.aspx>

**Attachment 12: Part 1 – Consultation with Educators**

# Rhode Island's ESEA Waiver Extension

*Focus Group*  
*February Meeting 24, 2014*

# Agenda for Today

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- ▶ Overview of ESEA Waiver Extension and Response to Desk Audit
- ▶ Review of current ESEA Waiver:
  - Principles I, II, and III
- ▶ Review of current classification system
- ▶ Transition issues



# Transition Design Principles

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- Maintain stability in the accountability system
- Account for what will be lower student performance on a new testing program
- Coordinate across all accountability systems: school, educator, and student
- Remain focused on gap closing
- Communicate broadly



# ESEA Waiver Extension and Response to Desk Audit



# Waiver History

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- ▶ 2011 USDE offers NCLB Waiver to states
- ▶ 2012 Rhode Island's Waiver Application Approved
- ▶ 2012 USDE offers opportunity to extend waiver for one year
- ▶ 2013 Rhode Island's Waiver Monitoring-findings pending
- ▶ 2014 Rhode Island prepares waiver extension and responds to audit findings



# Original ESEA Flexibility Elements

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State proposals for ESEA flexibility must provide commitments, plans, rationale, and evidence on several issues in each area:

## 1. College and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments for All Students

- A. Adopt college- and career-ready standards (in at least reading/language arts and math)
- B. Transition to college- and career-ready standards
- C. Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned assessments that measure student growth in knowledge and skills

## 2. State-Developed, Differentiated Systems of Recognition, Accountability, and Support

- A. Develop and implement a state-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support
  - B. Set ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives
  - C. Identify Reward Schools (highest-performing)
  - D. Identify Priority Schools (lowest-performing), including new turnaround principles
  - E. Identify Focus Schools (achievement gaps/lowest-performing subgroups)
  - F. Provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools
- 



# Original ESEA Flexibility Elements (cont.)

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- ▶ **3. Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership through Educator Evaluation**
  - A. Develop and adopt guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems
  - B. Ensure LEAs implement evaluation and support systems
- ▶ **4. Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden**



# Waiver Extension

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- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is now offering each State educational agency (SEA) that was approved to begin implementing ESEA flexibility in the 2012-2013 school year an opportunity to seek a one-year extension (i.e., through the 2014-2015 school year) of its ESEA flexibility request.
- This one-year extension will allow SEAs and ED to gather additional information on successes and challenges in the implementation of reforms committed to under ESEA flexibility, in order to improve current systems and better support students and teachers.



# Waiver Extension: What To Include

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## **Description of Proposed Amendment**

- Briefly describe the amendment being proposed. If necessary, describe any changes to other areas of the request that may result if the proposed amendment is approved.

## **Rationale**

- Explain how the proposed amendment will help the SEA carry out, consistent with the principles of ESEA flexibility, the reforms included in its ESEA flexibility request.
- 



# Waiver Extension: Required Amendments

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An SEA must amend its flexibility request to address outstanding monitoring next steps, conditions, or high-risk status. For example:

- For an SEA that has withdrawn from an RTTA consortium since initial approval, updated plan to administer CCR-aligned assessments no later than 2014-2015
- Modified timeline for using teacher and principal evaluation systems to inform personnel decisions if the SEA requested and received that additional flexibility
- For an SEA that has not adopted and begun to implement in the 2013-2014 school year English language proficiency standards that correspond to a State's college- and career-ready standards



# Waiver Extension: Optional Amendments

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In requesting an extension, an SEA might also wish to make changes to its approved request as part of its process of continuous improvement. For example:

- Modify school rating system to better include subgroup performance
- Provide more meaningful rewards to reward schools



# Waiver Extension Timelines

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- ▶ December, 2013 – ED issues a template letter
- ▶ November, 2013 – January, 2014 – ED issues Part B monitoring reports\*
- ▶ January, 2014 – February, 2014 – ED receives extension requests on a rolling basis
- ▶ January, 2014 – June 1, 2014 – ED issues extensions /RI must submit application no more than 60 days after receiving feedback from monitoring

\*RI has not received its monitoring report as of 2/24/2014



# Review of Rhode Island's Current Waiver



## Principle I: *College and Career Ready Expectations*

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- ▶ Transition to the Common Core State Standards
- ▶ Building a Comprehensive Assessment System
- ▶ Developing an Instructional Support System
- ▶ Committing to PARCC Assessments
- ▶ Aligning English language proficiency standards to CCSS
- ▶ Using Data to Inform Instructional Decisions
- ▶ Ensuring our Graduates are Ready for College and Careers



## Principle II: *Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support*

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- ▶ Analyzing state testing data in reading and mathematics from different perspectives in order to consider absolute performance, growth, gaps, and achievement at the highest levels of performance
- ▶ Acknowledging schools make progress toward targets at different paces. In addition to determining whether targets are met each year, the model determines the amount of progress schools make toward their 2017 goals
- ▶ Featuring graduation rates prominently within all high schools
- ▶ Implementing an Intervention System that begins with a diagnostic screen
- ▶ Moving to 3 Models- Closure, Restart, Flex Model



## Principle III: *Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership*

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- ▶ Improving Teaching and Learning through Evaluation
- ▶ Including Student Learning- focus on Growth Model
- ▶ Using Evaluation Data to Improve Teaching and Learning
- ▶ Using Evaluation Data to Inform Personnel Decisions
- ▶ Continuous Improvement of the System



# Rhode Island's Current Classification System



# Cross-Cutting Features

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## 1. Reducing minimum “n” to 20

## 2. Performance Reference Group

- The PRG is made of students who are not economically disadvantaged, not in English Learner (EL) programs and not receiving Individualized Education Program (IEP) Services.
- This is the highest performing group of students in our state and the group against which all other groups will be compared.
- A PRG will be set for each LEA for reading and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and, high school levels.



# Cross-Cutting Features

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## **3. Consolidated Program Subgroup**

- Includes English Learners (ELs) including former English Learners that are being monitored and students with disabilities (including students who take the alternate assessment).
- Results in the ability to hold 81% of schools accountable for the performance of these students.

## **4. Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup**

- Includes all federal racial minorities as prescribed by the National Forum on Education Statistics (Minority) plus Free and Reduced-price Lunch students (FRL).
  - Results in the inclusion of 269 of the 282 schools.
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# Metrics Informing School Accountability

Measure	Components	Elementary / Middle Schools	High Schools
Absolute Percent Proficient	All Students Minority + FRL IEP +LEP	30	30
Progress To 2017 Target	All Students	10	10
Achievement Gaps	Minority+FRL	30	30
	IEP+LEP		
Percent of Tested students in Distinction Level	All Students	5	5
Growth	All Students	25	n/a
	Minority + FRL		
	IEP+LEP		
HS Graduation Rates	All Students	n/a	20
High School Scaled Score	All Students	n/a	5
TOTAL		100	100

## Additional Classification Criteria

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1. An Absolute Proficiency Metric of less than or equal to 10; or
2. A Gap Score Metric of 15 or less; or
3. A Growth Score Metric of 7.5 or less; or
4. A combined Graduation and High School Scaled Score Change of 10 or less or
5. Fail to attain any AMO for two consecutive years



# School Classification

Classification	Description
Commended	Commended Schools are the highest performing schools. They represent the strongest patterns of performance across metrics, test at least 95% of their students, and serve all students well.
Leading	Leading schools demonstrate success by having strong achievement in reading and mathematics, small or no gaps in student performance, or are improving student achievement, or increasing graduation rates.
Typical	Typical Schools perform near or at the state average and may out-perform the state average on one or more metrics but also may demonstrate significant challenges on one or more metrics.
Warning	Warning schools have a combination of substandard achievement in reading and math, unacceptable achievement gaps, and demonstrate little or no progress in improving achievement or graduation rates.
Focus	Focus schools have substandard achievement in reading and math, unacceptable achievement gaps, and demonstrate little or no academic progress in improving student achievement or increasing graduation rates.
Priority	Priority schools have the lowest achievement in reading and mathematics, intolerable gaps in student performance and demonstrate little or no academic progress in improving student achievement or increasing graduation rates.

# Transition Considerations



# Assessment and Accountability Transition

<b>October 2013</b>	Grades 3-8: last NECAP Reading, Writing and Mathematics administration Grade 11: NECAP reading, Writing, and Mathematics	Assessment of 2012-2013 teaching year
<b>May/June 2014</b>	School Accountability released	
<b>October 2014</b>	Grade 11: NECAP Reading and Mathematics	Assessment of 2013-2014 teaching year
<b>Winter/ Spring 2015</b>	Grades 3-8: First PARCC administration High School Grades 9 & 10: First PARCC administration	Assessment of 2014-2015 teaching year
<b>November 2015</b>	School Accountability released <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delayed due to PARCC standard setting</li> </ul>	

# School Year 2014-2015 Assessments

<b>Elementary</b>	<p>PARCC grade specific ELA and Mathematics assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• March/April 2015 Performance Based Assessments (PBA) in ELA and Mathematics</li><li>• May 2015 End of Year assessments in ELA and Mathematics</li></ul>
<b>Middle School</b>	<p>PARCC grade specific ELA and Mathematics assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• March/April 2015 Performance Based Assessments (PBA) in ELA and Mathematics</li><li>• May 2015 End of Year assessments in ELA and Mathematics</li></ul> <p>Some students will take Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade</p>
<b>High School</b>	<p><b>PARCC course specific ELA and Mathematics assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PARCC assessments will be administered for Fall Block, Traditional Year, and Spring Block schedules</li></ul> <p><b>Grade 9:</b> ELA I or course specific Mathematics test. <b>Grade 10:</b> ELA II or course specific Mathematics test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•NECAP assessments</li></ul> <p><b>Grade 11:</b> NECAP Reading and Mathematics (October 2014)</p>

# Questions

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- ▶ What features of the accountability system work well and which need re-examination?
- ▶ Which aspects of the accountability system are easily adaptable in 2014-15?
- ▶ Which aspects need to be discussed and considered more carefully in 2014-15?
- ▶ What questions do you have about school accountability and graduation requirements or with educator evaluation?



**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, April 11, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. RIDE prepares [ESEA Flexibility Request](#) renewal application
2. RIDE participates in [settlement agreement](#) with U.S. Department of Justice regarding students, adults with disabilities
3. [NECAP retest](#) results to be ready this month

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

***Assessments:***

4. [NECAP Science](#) testing to begin on May 5

***Health and Safety:***

5. Annual [School Health Report](#) forms to be posted Monday, due **June 20 – Action Item**

***Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge:***

6. [Exceed website](#) launched; schools, programs eligible to apply to participate in BrightStars

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

7. [Grants](#) available for school counseling, turnaround-school leaders

8. U.S. Department of Education posts materials on parent, community [engagement](#)

### **From other state agencies**

9. [Governor's Workforce Board](#) to issue grants for partnerships between employers and education providers

### **From other organizations**

10. Brown University math institute to run [math day camp](#) for high-school girls
11. Rhode Island Bar Association develops lessons, schedules essay contest to mark [Rhode Island Law Day](#)

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### **Action Item Calendar**

- April 25: [NECAP Science](#) testing schedules due  
April 28: Selection of [induction model](#) due  
May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due  
June 20: School Health Reports due (see [below](#))
-

## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. RIDE prepares ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application**

As you may know, RIDE is engaged in the process of applying for a renewal of the ESEA Flexibility Request, which the U.S. Department of Education initially approved in May 2012. This approved request allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability. Under our previous system, we classified schools based almost entirely on the percentage of students who attained proficiency on state assessments. The current system includes many additional measures, including progress toward goals, growth over time, percent of students attaining proficiency with distinction, closing achievement gaps, and graduation rates. Our current system also provides schools identified for intervention with the autonomy to select interventions that respond to their context and their needs.

To earn approval for our renewal request, we need to make some revisions to our classification system, largely because of the transition from NECAP to PARCC assessments. This transition requires us to rethink how we can measure progress toward goals and annual growth as factors within our accountability system.

Over the past month, we have discussed our renewal request in several forums, and we will continue our outreach efforts over the course of the next several weeks. We will draw on what we've heard and learned from teachers, school leaders, parents, and community organizations as we work to complete our renewal request.

## **2. RIDE participates in settlement agreement with U.S. Department of Justice regarding students, adults with disabilities**

RIDE was glad to be a part of the news conference on Tuesday regarding the settlement agreement that Rhode Island has signed with the U.S. Department of Justice. We will continue to work with you and your team to ensure that students with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their family members are involved in designing educational plans. Our shared goals are to see that students with intellectual or developmental disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment, as appropriate for their educational needs, and that these students receive the necessary instruction and support to prepare them for careers that will be challenging and fulfilling, for further career preparation and training during their adulthood, and to live as independently as possible.

## **3. NECAP retest results to be ready this month**

We have received some good news: The results of the 2014 NECAP retest will be available this month, which is sooner than we had anticipated. We will let you know when you will be able to access the scores from your LEA through our e-ride system. I am pleased that Measured Progress and our assessment team have worked to expedite this process.

**From RIDE**

***Assessments:***

## **4. NECAP Science testing to begin on May 5**

The NECAP Science testing window this year is **May 5 – 22**. All testing—including accommodations and make-up testing—*must* be completed by May 22. In planning your assessment schedule, you should take into consideration religious holidays and local events that may affect students' ability to participate. It is important that you allow ample time for make-up test sessions for those students who are absent for any reason (including absences for religious holidays) during regularly scheduled testing dates.

Principals and test coordinators are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all eligible students are tested. Therefore, you and your staff members must:

- ensure that parents and guardians are aware of the purpose of the assessment and that they have access to your NECAP testing schedule in advance so that they can plan accordingly;
- strongly discourage parents and guardians from planning any vacations or other activities that would prevent their children from testing with their peers during scheduled test-administration days;
- ensure that parents and guardians are aware that their children must make up any testing they missed while absent and that all make-up testing must be completed no later than May 22; and
- encourage parents and guardians to contact the principal, test coordinator, or teacher if their children will be absent during testing so that schools can arrange for make-up testing.

During the testing period, please encourage students to get plenty of rest, to eat a good breakfast on the day of testing, and to

perform at their very best so that we all can take pride in the accomplishments of our students and their teachers!

***Health and Safety:***

**5. Annual School Health Report forms to be posted Monday, due June 20 – Action Item**

The *Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs*, Section 2.5, require all LEAs and nonpublic-school authorities to submit to the Commissioner of Education and to the Director of Health on an annual basis a report pertaining to the school or district health program. The Annual School Health Report provides a standardized template to fulfill this reporting requirement and allows RIDE and the Department of Health to monitor school and district compliance with school health-related statutes, regulations, and protocols that ensure the health and safety of students and staff at all Rhode Island schools.

To ensure compliance with school health and safety statutes and regulations and to align with the beginning of each academic school year, this Annual School Health Report will apply to the school years 2013-14 and 2014-15. All future annual reports must be submitted prior to each school year.

The Annual School Health Report template will be available through eRIDE on Monday (April 14). You will receive an e-mail notification from RIDE when the report is open for completion and submission via eRIDE. The reports are due on **June 20**.

For a [preview](#) of the Annual School Health Report and for assistance in understanding what will be required, please see the

[Annual School Health Report Tutorial](#) and [Guidance/Q&A document](#).

***Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge:***

**6. Exceed website launched; schools, programs eligible to apply to participate in BrightStars**

The Exceed [website](#) has launched! Exceed is the new name for the Rhode Island cross-departmental initiative to implement the work of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. The name conveys the commitment of all of those in our early learning community who are working to help ensure that all of our young children have the opportunity to soar. Exceed is one of the key initiatives supporting the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, which was formed in 2010 to advise on the development of sustainable, high-quality systems of early-childhood education and care in Rhode Island.

Educators in our public schools can support outcomes for young children by understanding the quality of their early-childhood classrooms and by developing and implementing best practices. BrightStars is the first step. Last month, 11 public-school early-childhood programs applied to BrightStars. These applicants will have access to grants of up to \$30,000, and they will have access to technical assistance to improve the quality of their programs. All early-childhood programs in public schools are eligible to join BrightStars.

If you would like more information or if you would like someone to come and speak with your team about Exceed, please contact Melissa Emidy, at [Melissa.emidy@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Melissa.emidy@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8165.

## From the U.S. Department of Education

### **7. Grants available for school counseling, turnaround-school leaders**

The U.S. Department of Education is currently seeking applications for the [Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program](#) and the [Turnaround School Leaders Program](#). The school-counseling program provides funding to districts to establish or expand school-counseling programs, with special consideration given to applicants that can: demonstrate the greatest need for counseling services in the schools to be served, propose the most innovative and promising approaches, and show the greatest potential for replication and dissemination. Applications are due **April 28**. The school-leadership program supports projects to develop and implement or enhance and implement a critical-leadership pipeline that selects, prepares, places, supports, and retains school leaders for School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools or SIG-eligible schools. Applications are due **May 23**.

### **8. U.S. Department of Education posts materials on parent, community engagement**

The U.S. Department of Education is proud to release a framework for schools and their broader communities to build parent and community engagement. Across the nation, less than a quarter of residents are 18 years old or younger, and everyone has a responsibility for helping schools succeed. The [Dual Capacity framework](#) – a process used to teach staff to effectively engage parents and for parents to work successfully with the schools to increase student achievement – provides a model that schools and districts can use to build the type of effective community

engagement that will make schools the center of communities ([web page](#), with blog post, frequently asked questions, and video).

### **From other state agencies**

#### **9. Governor's Workforce Board to issue grants for partnerships between employers and education providers**

Please see this message from the Governor's Workforce Board:

The Governor's Workforce Board is pleased to issue a Request for Proposals for a second round of funding of up to \$1.75 million to support innovative partnerships between employers and education and training providers that will provide work-readiness, skills training, experiential learning, and career pathways to address the workforce needs of Rhode Island employers and increase the employability of students, out-of-school youth, and unemployed adults. Awards are anticipated to range from \$80,000 to \$200,000.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to attend a bidders' conference on **Wednesday** (April 16), from 10 - 11:30 a.m., at the Department of Labor & Training, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Cranston. Pre-register by contacting Amelia Roberts, at 462-8864 or [Amelia.Roberts@dlt.ri.gov](mailto:Amelia.Roberts@dlt.ri.gov).

For a copy of the Request for Proposals, click below:

- [MS Word Version](#)
- [Pdf Version](#)

For a copy of an Excel version of the required Outcome Targets form, [click here](#).

### **From other organizations**

#### **10. Brown University math institute to run math day camp for high-school girls**

Please see this message from Brown University, and feel free to share this message with high-school mathematics teachers:

The Brown University Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics ([ICERM](#)) has scheduled GirlsGetMath, a math day camp for 25 Providence-area high-school girls.

This five-day, non-residential mathematics program is open girls who will have just completed either grade 9 or grade 10 by July.

[GirlsGetMath](#) will encourage these young women to explore, and will invite them to excel in, the mathematical sciences. Accomplished professional women, enthusiastic about serving as career models as well as scientific mentors, will lead the program. Potential topics include: cryptography, the mathematics of voting, image processing, prime numbers and factoring, and fractals.

The goals of the program are:

- to show high-school girls that the study of mathematics can be exciting, beautiful, and useful;

- to build confidence in students' mathematical knowledge through engaging and expert mathematical instruction;
- to introduce high-school students to a variety of career opportunities in which sophisticated mathematical ability plays a key role;
- to emphasize the strategic role mathematics plays for success in STEM careers;
- to provide the participants with a support group and expert mentors who are successful undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals from the STEM workforce; and
- to have a positive influence on the way students view their mathematical interest and ability.

Tuition is \$100 (lunch included). Generous financial aid is available.

The program website and application details can be found here:

<http://icerm.brown.edu/girlsgetmath2014/>

Application deadline: **May 15**

The selection committee will review all applications after the May 15 deadline. Accepted students without 100-percent financial aid will receive information on how to pay the tuition in their acceptance letter.

**11. Rhode Island Bar Association develops lessons, schedules essay contest to mark Rhode Island Law Day**

The Rhode Island Bar Association notes that the 2014 Rhode Island Law Day will take place on May 2. The association has developed some topics for schools to use to meet the educational goals for Law Day. For information on classroom-program lessons and on the Rhode Island Law Day essay contest, go to:

<https://www.ribar.com/For%20the%20Public/Law%20Related%20Education/2014lawday.aspx>

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

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

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, April 18, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. LEAs can opt for [cyclical evaluation](#) model
2. LEAs receive 2014 [NECAP retest](#) results
3. RIDE schedules webinars on [ESEA Flexibility](#) Request
4. Mount Pleasant, Ponaganset leaders selected as [principals of the year](#)
5. Met School teacher to be honored for teaching [entrepreneurship](#)

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

***Assessments:***

6. Deadline for requesting student exemption from [NECAP Science](#) testing is **May 23**
7. Second testing window for the grade-8 [technology assessment](#) to open **April 28**

***Educator Certification:***

8. RIDE seeks public comments on [new tests](#) for educator certification in two areas

**Grants and awards:**

9. RIDE awards \$2.9 million in grants for [21<sup>st</sup>-Century Community Learning Centers](#)

**From other organizations**

10. Highlander Institute to hold [blended-learning conference](#) on **May 3**

**Attachments to this Field Memo**

Cyclical Evaluation Model

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**Action Item Calendar**

- April 25: [NECAP Science](#) testing schedules due
  - April 28: Selection of [induction model](#) due
  - May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due
  - June 20: School [Health](#) Reports due
- 

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

## **1. LEAs can opt for cyclical evaluation model**

We all are proud of our ongoing work toward ensuring that we have excellent teachers in every classroom and excellent leaders in every school. Our commitment to educator evaluations that provide educators with valuable information to improve performance is a key part of this on-going initiative.

As you know, we have received a lot of input over the past year from teachers, from principals, and from you and your association encouraging us to consider approval of a cyclical model for teacher evaluations. Educators have expressed a strong desire to maintain a high-quality evaluation process that emphasizes improvement, but they have also expressed a serious concern about the capacity of our evaluators to conduct full-scale evaluations of every teacher each year, as our current design requires. Over the past few months, we have worked closely with both the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association and the Rhode Island Association of School Principals to design together a cyclical model for evaluations that could begin in the coming school year. We are pleased that we have identified cyclical options that will allow us to maintain our shared commitment to providing a high-quality evaluation system while easing some of the burden on practitioners.

Thanks to this work, next year you will be able to select from among a new set of several options so as to make the best choice for evaluations that meet the needs of your school community. In the coming school year, you may choose to fully evaluate all teachers, to continue with the differentiated model that we approved a year ago, or to implement the newly designed cyclical model. I have attached to this field memo a document (Cyclical Evaluation Model) that outlines the features of the cyclical model.

In the coming weeks, we will provide you with more details and guidance about the cyclical model and how to notify us as to which model you will use in your schools. I appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership with you and the leadership of your association to develop this option for your consideration.

## **2. LEAs receive 2014 NECAP retest results**

I am glad that we were able to provide you on Wednesday afternoon with the your students' results on the 2014 NECAP retake. I hope that your high-school team has been able to speak to as many students and families as possible before the April vacation. It's important that students who have met the state-assessment graduation get this information as soon as possible, and it's also important that students who have not yet met this graduation requirement review with your team their next steps toward earning a diploma. Here at RIDE, we continue to collect information about the status of students in the Class of 2014, and I plan to report next month to the Board of Education regarding how many students are eligible for graduation this spring and how many current seniors are pursuing other options, such as other approved assessments, waivers, or more time in school.

## **3. RIDE schedules webinars on ESEA Flexibility Request**

As I noted to you in last week's Field Memo, we are in the process of developing our application for renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability in 2012. In renewing our request, we intend to leave the accountability system largely unchanged, but we do have to make some changes because of our transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. We continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two

webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well.

- Tuesday, April 29, from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- Wednesday, April 30, from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interesting in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community.

#### **4. Mount Pleasant, Ponaganset leaders selected as principals of the year**

Congratulations to Patricia Marcotte, of the Ponaganset Middle School, in Foster-Glocester, and to Scott Sutherland, principal of Mount Pleasant High School, in Providence, on their selection by the Rhode Island Association of School Principals as Rhode Island 2014 principals of the year.

The association honored Patricia as the Middle School Principal of the Year, noting that parents appreciate how hard Patricia works to provide supports to students in need of extra help, that teachers are motivated by her depth of knowledge and her enthusiasm, and that administrators recognize how she is continually engaged with the other schools in her community to ensure smooth transitions for students entering middle school and for graduates moving on to Ponaganset High School.

The association honored Scott as the High School Principal of the Year, recognizing that he has served for more than 10 years as a

school administrator in Providence and that over the past two years he has “dramatically led the culture and climate transformation” at Mount Pleasant. The association noted that Scott has “led the transformation to ... establish a safe, welcoming environment [ and ] create a true professional learning community” at the school.

Thank you, Patricia and Scott, for the work you are doing for students and teachers in your schools and for the families in your communities!

### **5. Met School teacher to be honored for teaching entrepreneurship**

The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship will recognize Jodie Woodruff, of The Met School, in Providence, as one of the Global Enterprising Educators of 2014 at its annual Global Gala next week in Washington. The organization will honor Woodruff for establishing the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center at The Met, for setting up internships for her students, and for bringing entrepreneurs from the community into the school on a weekly basis. Congratulations to Jodie and to The Met on this recognition!

**From RIDE**

### ***Assessments:***

### **6. Deadline for requesting student exemption from NECAP Science testing is May 23**

All requests for state-approved special consideration or exemption from NECAP Science testing must be submitted online no later than **May 23**, via eRIDE, using the following link:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/SASC/>

We strongly encourage all requests for exemption to be submitted as soon as possible rather than at the end of the testing window. Early submission of these requests will allow you sufficient time to test the student if the request for exemption is denied.

As a reminder, *no* exemption request will be processed until a *signed copy* of the “Form 1: District Assurances Form” has been faxed to RIDE (222-3605).

As in previous years, when your and your testing coordinators log into eRIDE you will see the icon “NECAP/RIAA Exemption Requests,” and you can use this icon to access the necessary online forms.

In addition, the “State-Approved Special Considerations for Statewide Assessments: Guidelines & Forms” document has been updated for the current school year to outline the policies and procedures for requesting student exemptions. This document is available on the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/NECAPAssessment/NECAPExemptions.aspx>

The document is also available on the eRIDE exemptions page, at:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/SASC/>

It is very important that you review this guidance document before attempting to submit requests through eRIDE. If you have any questions about NECAP Science exemptions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (phone: 222-8494; e-mail: [Kevon.Tucker-Seeley@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Kevon.Tucker-Seeley@ride.ri.gov)).

## **7. Second testing window for the grade-8 technology assessment to open April 28**

The second testing window for the grade-8 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills technology assessment opens right after April vacation, from **April 28 to May 23**. All grade-8 students who did not take the assessment during the first window must take the assessment during this window. A refresher webinar is being offered for those proctors who would like to brush up on details for administering the assessment. Proctors may register for one of the refresher webinars, which we will offer on Wednesday, April 30:

- [Refresher Webinar – Wed., April 30<sup>th</sup> – 8:00 AM](#); or
- [Refresher Webinar – Wed., April 30<sup>th</sup> – 3:00 PM](#)

A reports-overview webinar will be held on June 4, after all students have completed the assessment for the year. This webinar will help proctors retrieve the appropriate level of student, class, school, and district reports; read and interpret the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills data contained in the reports; and apply the results to instructional or programmatic decision-making. Details for registering for the Reports Overview webinar will be sent directly to proctors.

More information about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills assessment can be found on the [RIDE web site](#).

***Educator Certification:***

**8. RIDE seeks public comments on new tests for educator certification in two areas**

ETS, the testing company whose assessments we use for educator certification, is adding new tests and phasing out older tests. There are currently two tests (speech-language pathology and middle-school science) that have been regenerated; these changes will affect certification requirements in Rhode Island. We are seeking public comment from the education community and the general public on the proposed redesigned certification tests and on the passing scores for initial educator certification in the areas of speech-language pathology and middle-school science. To provide comments on the proposed certification tests and passing scores, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Certification-Updates>.

If you have any questions about these new assessments, please feel free to contact Hilda Potrzeba, at [hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov](mailto:hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8891.

***Grants and awards:***

**9. RIDE awards \$2.9 million in grants for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Community Learning Centers**

RIDE has awarded \$2,926,223 in grants to run school-linked afterschool and summer programs, as part of the federally funded 21st-Century Community Learning Centers initiative.

We have awarded grants to:

- AS220 – \$88,200
- The Boys & Girls Club of East Providence – \$163,353
- The Boys & Girls Club of Providence – \$105,000
- The Central Falls School District – 2 grants – \$240,350
- The Cranston Public Schools – 2 grants – \$235,589
- The East Bay Community Action Program – \$61,000
- The Highlander Institute – \$135,000
- Inspiring Minds – \$149,000
- The Learning Community Charter School – \$105,000
- The Met School – \$100,000
- The Mt. Hope Learning Center – \$149,858
- Newport Community School – 2 grants – \$214,379
- The Paul Cuffee School – \$135,000
- The Pawtucket School Department – 2 grants – \$343,732
- The Swearer Center, at Brown University – \$141,762
- The Woonsocket Education Department – 2 grants – \$300,000
- The YMCA of Greater Providence – 2 grants – \$259,000

These grants are to provide before-school, afterschool, vacation-time, and summer programs for children and youth in high-poverty communities. The programs offer academic support, enrichment, recreation, and family-engagement services. RIDE awarded the grants through a competitive application process. With the addition of these grants, there will be 24 agencies in Rhode Island operating 21st-Century Community Learning Centers that serve a total of 53 schools.

RIDE administers the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers program and provides technical assistance and professional development to the grant recipients to ensure that the programs are of high quality, that they are linked to academic achievement, and that they are aligned to the state standards for afterschool programs.

### **From other organizations**

#### **10. Highlander Institute to hold blended-learning conference on May 3**

The Highlander Institute is hosting its third annual Blended Learning & Technology Conference on Saturday, May 3, at the URI Feinstein Campus, in Providence. Strands for both educators and administrators promise to inspire. The afternoon “unconference” will provide participants with the time and space to discuss topics that they are tackling in their schools. The conference keynote speaker will be Richard Culatta, director of the Office of Educational Technology for the U.S. Department of Education. His work focuses on leveraging technology to create personalized learning experiences for all students and on promoting increased connectivity to improve access to education and to make college more affordable. Culatta is passionate about accelerating innovation in education, with a particular interest in games for learning, personalized learning, and open education. Click here to [register for the Blended Learning and Technology Conference](#).

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

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

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, April 25, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. LEAs encouraged to communicate with, develop plans for seniors who have not yet met [graduation](#) requirements
2. RIDE nearing completion of [ESEA Flexibility](#) Request renewal application
3. East Greenwich, Providence high-school seniors named as 2014 [Presidential Scholar](#) semifinalists
4. Pell School, Greene School selected as 2014 [Green Ribbon Schools](#)
5. Woonsocket school complex recognized as [outstanding growth project](#)
6. Districts, schools win [state grants](#) for energy efficiency, library services
7. Highlander Institute invites educators to register for May 3 conference on [blended learning](#) and technology

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

***Assessments:***

8. [PARCC](#) testing schedules posted; PARCC can be used as end-of-course measure, juniors will take NECAP assessments in October

***Reports to RIDE:***

9. [School calendars](#) to be submitted to RIDE by **May 16** –  
***Action Item***

***Health and Safety:***

10. Principals must submit reports to RIDE after each  
[emergency drill](#)

***School Finance:***

11. RIDE updates calculations of [education aid](#) for Fiscal  
Year 2015

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

12. U.S. Department of Education announces new  
[Investing in Innovation](#) grants; applications due **June 24**
13. Education, Agriculture Secretaries encourage support  
for [summer meal programs](#)
14. U.S. Department of Education to develop plan to  
strengthen [teacher-preparation programs](#)
15. Resources available on prevention of [teen dating  
violence](#) and sexual assault

**From other state agencies**

16. [Manufacturing Workforce Summit](#) scheduled for **May 29**, pre-registration required
17. Adult Education Professional Development Center, Broadband Rhode Island announce plan to improve adult [digital literacy](#)

### **From other organizations**

18. Organization seeks host families for [exchange students](#)
19. Farmers Insurance launches program to [thank teachers](#), provide teachers with grants

### **Attachments to this Field Memo**

FY 2015 Formula Updates – April 2014

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### **Action Item Calendar**

**Today** (April 25): [NECAP Science](#) testing schedules due  
**Monday** (April 28): Selection of [induction model](#) due  
May 16: School calendars due (see [below](#))  
May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due  
June 20: School [Health](#) Reports due

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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. LEAs encouraged to communicate with, develop plans for seniors who have not yet met graduation requirements**

Last week, you received student results on the 2014 NECAP retake. The good news is that several hundred more students have attained at least partial proficiency or made significant growth, and these students have now fulfilled this component of our Diploma System. As we continue to collect more information from you and your colleagues, our team at RIDE is compiling the data and I will make a full report on students' progress toward graduation at next month's meeting of the Board of Education.

I hope that your high-school team was able to speak about the results to as many students and families as possible before the April vacation. As you continue to plan for current seniors who have not yet met this graduation requirement, it's important that students who have not yet met this graduation requirement review with your team their next steps toward earning a diploma. If you have any procedural questions regarding students pursuing other options, such as other approved assessments, waivers, or more time in school, please contact Cali Cornell ([cali.cornell@ride.ri.gov](mailto:cali.cornell@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8251), and of course I am always available to talk with you about these matters as well.

### **2. RIDE nearing completion of ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application**

As the May 12 submission deadline approaches, we are completing the process of developing our application for renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement

our current system of school accountability in 2012. It has been very important to all of us at RIDE that we develop our renewal request in consultation with you and your colleagues, as well as with other school leaders, teachers, and community members. I want to thank you and your association for helping us with this process; we have been developing our renewal request based in part on input from a focus group that included several superintendents: Superintendents Auger, Barnes, Erinakes, Ricci, and Thies, as well as a head of a charter public school (Jeremy Chiapetta), and other school district leaders (Marco Andrade, Dennis Mullen, Lois Short, and Alan Tenreiro), and I want to thank all of the participants for their insights over the course of five meetings.

Overall, we intend to leave the accountability system largely unchanged, but we do have to make some changes because of our transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. I want to remind you, however, that we continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- **Tuesday** (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- **Wednesday** (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I once again invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community.

### **3. East Greenwich, Providence high-school seniors named as 2014 Presidential Scholar semifinalists**

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, at the U.S. Department of Education, has informed us that the program has selected three seniors in Rhode Island public high schools as 2014 Presidential Scholars semifinalists. Congratulations, to Alice Raynor, of Classical High School, in Providence, and to Heather Shen and Michelle Xiong, both of East Greenwich High School. The Presidential Scholar award is one of the highest honors in the country for high-school students. Alice, Heather, and Michelle are 565 semifinalists; over the next two months, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars will select about 140 of the semifinalists as 2014 Presidential Scholars.

### **4. Pell School, Greene School selected as 2014 Green Ribbon Schools**

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Education announced that two Rhode Island schools have won 2014 Green Ribbon School awards: the Claiborne Pell Elementary School, in Newport, and The Greene School, a charter public school in West Greenwich.

Green Ribbon Schools are recognized “for their exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways.”

The Pell School, which is lodged in a new facility that opened at the beginning this school year, was recognized for the many design features in the building (e.g., reflective roof materials, low-velocity ventilation system, optimal orientation for daylight) as well as for its environmental and outdoors program, such as the

Fitness Gram for all students and the garden-to-table initiative. The Greene School was honored in part because of its focus on environmental literacy: teachers deliver the majority of the curriculum through environmental topics, such as energy, biodiversity, and sustainable development; students learn through multidisciplinary “learning expeditions,” such as the 100 Mile Radius Dinner, which culminates in a meal prepared with local foods.

Across Rhode Island, many of our teachers and students are deeply engaged in exciting environmental projects, ranging from community gardens to energy audits to wildlife protection. The two schools that the U.S. Department of Education recognized represent some of the best ongoing work in our communities to teach schoolchildren about the world in which we live and to ensure that our school buildings are models of green design. Congratulations to the students, teachers, school leaders, and community members who have earned these awards!

### **5. Woonsocket school complex recognized as outstanding growth project**

Grow Smart Rhode Island has awarded a 2014 Smart Growth Award to the City of Woonsocket in recognition of the Woonsocket Middle School complex, which the organization has identified as one of our Outstanding Growth Projects in the state. “The newly developed Woonsocket Middle School complex is a remarkable example of far-sighted city planning,” Grow Smart Rhode Island notes in its citation. “Following a complicated clean-up of the site and of contaminated groundwater that had threatened the Blackstone River ... the city created a safe, state-of-the-art educational complex.” The school will receive its award at the Grow Smart Rhode Island summit next month.

Congratulations to the city and school leaders in Woonsocket who brought this project to fruition!

## **6. Districts, schools win state grants for energy efficiency, library services**

Three of our school districts and one high school have received Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative grants from the Office of Energy Resources. The Chariho Regional, East Greenwich, and Lincoln School Districts have received grants totaling \$538,000 for energy-efficient lighting upgrades, boiler replacements, and installation of controls for heating systems and fans. West Warwick High School received a grant to install a solar-voltaic system on its field house and ice rink. All of these investments will save money for the school districts by lowering energy costs and they will benefit our state by supporting renewable energy. I applaud the school leaders from Chariho, East Greenwich, Lincoln, and West Warwick for responding to this grant opportunity and for investing in energy efficiency.

Yesterday, the Office of Library Services awarded Library of Rhode Island grants to the Archie R. Cole Middle School, in East Greenwich, to enable students to create short promotional videos for fiction and nonfiction books, and to the Central Falls Public Library, to work with the Central Falls School Department and other organizations to design a media-education lab and to hold a summer camp that will teach digital literacy to grade-8 students. These both sound like exciting and important programs that will benefit Rhode Island middle-school students.

## **7. Highlander Institute invites educators to register for May 3 conference on blended learning and technology**

The Highlander Institute invites educators and all friends of education to attend its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Blended Learning & Technology Conference, on Saturday, May 3, from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at the University of Rhode Island Providence Feinstein Campus, Media Education Lab at the Harrington School, 80 Washington St. (the Shepard Building, which also houses our RIDE offices). Richard Culatta, the Director of the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education, will be the keynote speaker. The conference will include both a teacher “track” (Classroom Tools and Instruction) and an administrator “track” (Decision Points and Policies). The institute is particularly reaching out administrators who may wish to attend, as specific aspects of the program will be geared toward school and district leaders. If you or your assistant superintendent are interested in registering for this conference, please contact me directly and I will provide you with registration information. More details about the conference are available here:

<http://www.blendedlearningconference.com/>

### **From RIDE**

#### ***Assessments:***

- 8. PARCC testing schedules posted; PARCC can be used as end-of-course measure, juniors will take NECAP assessments in October**

Rhode Island schools will administer PARCC assessments for the first time during the coming school year (2014-15). Students in grades 3 through high school will be taking the assessments in English language arts and mathematics. The assessments are

divided into two components: a *Performance-Based Assessment* (PBA) component, administered about 75 percent of the way through the school year, and an *End-of-Year* (EOY) component that will be administered closer to the end of the year. The length of the testing window differs depending on whether students are taking the assessment on a computer or using paper and pencil. There will be a 20-day window for each component to schedule computer-based testing and a 10-day window for paper and pencil. The computer-based window will be longer in order to provide schools sufficient time to arrange a schedule for students using electronic devices. Next month, RIDE will ask LEAs to complete a survey indicating the number of paper-pencil and the number of online assessments you will administer in each school during the coming school year.

The design of the PARCC assessments supports their use as end-of-course assessments. As such, there are two testing windows for PARCC assessments that might be used as an end-of-course measure. These assessments include English I, English II, algebra I, geometry, integrated mathematics I, and integrated mathematics II. The first testing window (December and January) aligns with courses that are completed in the first half of a school year. This first testing window will be abbreviated in the coming school year (2014-15), and assessments will be offered only in a paper-and-pencil version. The second window will be in the spring. Three PARCC assessments – English III, algebra II, and integrated mathematics III – will neither be required nor paid for by the state as part of the Rhode Island assessment program. LEAs may decide to use these assessments at the local level.

The NECAP reading and mathematics assessments in grade 11 will be administered to all juniors in October of 2014. These assessments will be used to inform graduation requirements and

for high-school accountability. Seniors may also take the NECAP assessment in October, as appropriate, to inform graduation requirements. The testing window will be slightly shorter next year, with the goal of returning results before January. It is important to note that, in the coming school year, juniors do *not* have to take the PARCC assessments, even if they are enrolled in an algebra I, geometry, integrated mathematics I, or integrated mathematics II courses, although they may choose to do so.

We have posted the complete testing windows for the coming school year on our website, at:

[www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-schedule](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-schedule).

Please contact Phyllis Lynch ([phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov](mailto:phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov)) if you have any questions about the testing schedules for the coming school year.

### ***Reports to RIDE:***

#### **9. School calendars to be submitted to RIDE by May 16 – *Action Item***

This is a reminder that it is time for LEA data managers to submit 2014-15 calendars to RIDE. Data managers will be advised that calendars must be submitted using the e-ride system no later than Friday, May 16; RIDE no longer accepts hard copies of calendars. Please contact Mario Goncalves, at 222-8968 or [Mario.Goncalves@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Mario.Goncalves@ride.ri.gov), for assistance with this matter.

### ***Health and Safety:***

**10. Principals must submit reports to RIDE after each emergency drill**

This is a reminder that all emergency-drill information must be entered in eRIDE following the completion of each drill. This information is monitored by RIDE on a regular basis. The principal of each school is responsible for the successful implementation of the Rhode Island fire-safety statutes, including the timely and accurate reporting of emergency drills.

In accordance with state law ([§16-21-4](#), [§16-21-5](#)), all schools (public and nonpublic) in Rhode Island are required to perform 15 emergency drills that include fire, lockdown, and evacuation drills. At least one drill shall be conducted each month, and at least one out of every four must be obstructed drills. As part of the required 15 emergency drills, each school must conduct two evacuation drills and two lockdown drills. One lockdown drill shall occur in September and one in January.

You can access the “Health and Safety of Pupils” statutes on the Rhode Island General Assembly website, at:

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-21/16-21-4.HTM>

and

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-21/16-21-5.HTM>

***School Finance:***

## **11. RIDE updates calculations of education aid for Fiscal Year 2015**

As part of the funding-formula law, state education aid is based on data from one year prior to the year in which the state distributes the aid. Therefore, we must base Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 aid on enrollment and free- or reduced-price lunch data from FY 2014. To fulfill this mandate, we collected data on student enrollments and free- or reduced-price lunch status from the beginning of the current school year through last month. We then annualized this information to reflect a full year. We also adjusted the calculations to account for the results of the charter-public-school lotteries held last month. Remember that the funding formula spreads all changes over the remaining years of the transition: 4 years for those LEAs that currently receive insufficient state funding and 7 years for those LEAs that currently receive an excess of state funding. See the attached analysis (FY 2015 Formula Updates – April 2014) for the changes by LEA.

Please note that we have forwarded this data to the Governor's Office and to the General Assembly for their consideration. No changes will go into effect until the General Assembly passes, and Governor Chafee signs, the annual appropriations bill.

If you have any questions about these aid calculations, please contact Kristen Cole, at 222-4681 or [kristen.cole@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kristen.cole@ride.ri.gov).

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

## **12. Education, Agriculture Secretaries encourage support for summer meal programs**

Please see this letter from Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture:

Dear Colleague:

Children are America's greatest treasure, and ensuring they have the proper nutrition to learn, grow up healthy, and reach their full potential is one of our most important duties as community members, educators, and leaders. Nearly 50 years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared the War on Poverty, a set of initiatives that continues to expand educational opportunities, secure economic equality, and provide nutritious meals to those in need. Our nation has a long and impressive history of ensuring that its needy citizens, especially children, have enough food in order to thrive. Your leadership can help to ensure that those same children do not go hungry in your community this summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) summer meal programs that are available to schools include the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). These programs operate in partnership with the federal government, state agencies, and local organizations to serve free meals to children age 18 years and younger. The USDA provides reimbursement for meals; state agencies administer the program; and local organizations, including schools, nonprofits, parks and recreation departments, libraries, and faith-based groups serve the meals. Summer meals programs are critical to children in need because we know that only a portion of students participate in summer meal programs compared with those who participate during the school year. During the 2012-13 school year,

approximately 21-million children were served free and reduced-price meals while only approximately 3.5-million children participated in a meal program during the summer of 2013.

We need your leadership and assistance to help feed hungry children this coming summer. There are many ways you can assist, but, specifically, you can:

*Provide children in your community with meals at your schools this summer.* Local schools are the best sites for summer feeding efforts. Children and parents are familiar with local schools, and schools are known for providing nutritious food in a safe environment. Even if your school will not be offering summer school, if it is located in a low-income area it can be a summer feeding site and fill that important meal gap for students so that they are ready to learn when they return to school in the fall.

*Ask teachers and staff in your schools to share information about nearby summer meal sites, whether the site is at your school or at other locations in your community.* School leaders can find local feeding sites by calling (866) 3-HUNGRY or (877) 8-HAMBRE or by visiting [www.whyhunger.org/findfood](http://www.whyhunger.org/findfood). Schools communicate regularly and effectively with the families of children in your community. You can help reach out and connect these families with summer meals before the school year ends and continue to make a difference in the lives of your students throughout the summer.

*Be a champion in your community.* As a recognized leader, you have many opportunities to meet with other

community leaders and organizations that have an interest in ensuring children have resources to succeed. Take the time to discuss summer meals programs and how others can get involved by becoming a sponsor or site that serves meals.

To learn more about the USDA summer meal programs visit:

[www.summerfood.usda.gov](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov).

In addition, the Food and Nutrition Service regional office staff is available to provide technical assistance and answer any questions you may have on USDA summer meal programs at the following link:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>.

Thank you, as always, for your dedication and commitment to our children. By working together, we can be sure our children have the food and nutrition needed to continue to grow and succeed.

**13. U.S. Department of Education announces new Investing in Innovation grants; applications due June 24**

The U.S. Department of Education has announced the start of the 2014 grant competition for the [Investing in Innovation \(i3\)](#) program's Scale-up and Validation categories. This competition will continue the U.S. Department of Education investments in promising strategies that can help close achievement gaps and improve educational outcomes for our neediest students.

The i3 program aims to develop and expand practices that accelerate student achievement and prepare students to succeed in college and in their careers. As in years past, the program includes three grant categories: Development, Validation and Scale-up. This year, school districts and nonprofit organizations, in partnership with districts or schools, are eligible to compete for nearly \$135 million across all three categories. The maximum grant amount available in each category is based on the evidence of effectiveness.

In March, the U.S. Department of Education announced the i3 Development competition for grants of up to \$3 million, and received nearly 400 applications. For this competition, Validation grants will provide up to \$12 million to fund projects with moderate evidence of effectiveness. Scale-up grants will provide up to \$20 million to fund projects with strong evidence of effectiveness and enable expansion across the country. All i3 projects conduct an independent evaluation to identify what works in education.

The [Notices Inviting Applications](#) are published in the Federal Register, and applications for the Scale-up and Validation grants are due **June 24**. To access the notices for the categories, visit:

*Scale-up*

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-04-23/pdf/2014-09263.pdf>

*Validation*

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-04-23/pdf/2014-09262.pdf>

To learn more about the Investing in Innovation Fund, visit:

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

**14. U.S. Department of Education to develop plan to strengthen teacher-preparation programs**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

Research confirms that the most important factor in a student's success in school is a strong teacher. However, almost two-thirds of new teachers report that their teacher-preparation program left them unprepared for the realities of the classroom. Moreover, for decades, institutions that prepare teachers have lacked the feedback needed to identify their strengths and weaknesses and had little information on where program graduates go to teach, how long they stay, and how they perform in the classroom.

Today, President Obama directed the U.S. Department of Education to lay out a plan to strengthen America's teacher-preparation programs for public discussion by this summer and to move forward on schedule to publish a final rule within the next year. The Administration will encourage and support states in developing systems that recognize excellence and provide all programs with information to help them improve while holding them accountable for how well they prepare teachers to succeed in today's classrooms and throughout their careers.

Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education plan will:

- build on state systems and efforts and the progress in the field to encourage all states to develop their own meaningful systems to identify high- and low-performing teacher-preparation programs across all kinds of programs, not just those based in colleges and universities;
- ask states to move away from current input-focused reporting requirements, streamline the current data requirements, incorporate more meaningful outcomes, and improve the availability of relevant information on teacher preparation; and
- rely on state-developed program ratings of preparation programs to determine program eligibility for [TEACH grants](#), which are available to students who are planning to become teachers in a high-need field in a low-income school.

## **15. Resources available on prevention of teen dating violence and sexual assault**

Please see this message from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

Every year, about 1 in 10 American teenagers experiences physical violence at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend, and many others are sexually and emotionally abused. The U.S. Department of Education is dedicated to working with students, families, educators, and communities to prevent abuse and support survivors. A new [compilation of resources](#) provides information to support schools and communities in their efforts to create safe, healthy learning environments and to identify, investigate, and remedy teen dating violence and sexual assault. (Note: This month is

National Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month; see [blog post](#).)

### **From other state agencies**

#### **16. Manufacturing Workforce Summit scheduled for May 29, pre-registration required**

On May 29, the Governor's Workforce Board, the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association, and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Service will hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Manufacturing Workforce Summit: Engineering the Manufacturing Talent Pipeline. The summit will run from 8 to 10:30 a.m., at the Providence Marriott Downtown, 1 Orms St. The event is free, but [pre-registration](#) is required by **May 22**.

#### **17. Adult Education Professional Development Center, Broadband Rhode Island announce plan to improve adult digital literacy**

The Rhode Island Adult Education Professional Development Center and Broadband Rhode Island have announced the launch of an agreement to develop and implement a plan for long-term sustainability of the Broadband Rhode Island Digital Literacy Project to improve adult Internet usage across the state. As part of the federally funded initiative, Broadband Rhode Island created a digital literacy program for adults, including curriculum and instructor training and established a thriving network of more than 200 volunteer and professional digital literacy trainers whose efforts target the state's disadvantaged populations. To date,

these instructors delivered digital literacy training to almost 1,000 adults through libraries, public housing authorities, adult education organizations, and senior centers.

The Professional Development Center and Broadband Rhode Island have outlined plans for numerous activities throughout this year that are designed to strengthen the Digital Literacy Project. The two organizations will work in partnership to develop a sustainable digital literacy trainer network, through adult education organizations and libraries, that does not rely solely on volunteers.

The work plan for 2014 also includes development of a recognized standard for digital literacy outcomes and establishment of criteria for evaluating adult learners' readiness to apply digital literacy skills to tasks such as participating in distance learning and completing essential life skills tasks online.

For the complete news release, see:

[http://broadband.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Public/RIAEPDC\\_BBRI\\_final\\_2.pdf](http://broadband.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Public/RIAEPDC_BBRI_final_2.pdf)

### **From other organizations**

#### **18. Organization seeks host families for exchange students**

The Council for Educational Travel USA is seeking host families who would welcome exchange students who will be arriving in Rhode Island in August. Each exchange student will have a minimum of three years of English-language instruction, and they

will carry health and accident insurance. The Rhode Island coordinator is Michelle Blanding, at [angelsandchins@aol.com](mailto:angelsandchins@aol.com). More information about the program is available at [www.cetusa.org](http://www.cetusa.org).

**19. Farmers Insurance launches program to thank teachers, provide teachers with grants**

Farmers Insurance has launched a Thank a Million Teachers campaign to recognize and thank teachers across the nation for the difference they make in our children's lives in thousands of classrooms every day. There are two components to the program; the first is the ability to thank a deserving teacher and the second is the opportunity for those "thanked" to apply for a \$2,500 grant.

Information about the program is available here:

[www.thankamillionteachers.com](http://www.thankamillionteachers.com).

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

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

**Commissioner's Field Memo Alert**  
**Tuesday, April 29, 2014**

**RIDE schedules webinars on ESEA Flexibility Request renewal application; seeks public comment – *Reminder***

As I noted to you in Friday's Field Memo, we are completing the process of developing our application for one-year renewal of our ESEA Flexibility Request, which allowed us to implement our current system of school accountability in 2012. It has been very important to all of us at RIDE that we develop our renewal request in consultation with you and your colleagues, as well as with other school leaders, teachers, and community members.

I want to remind you that we continue to seek input on our renewal application, and to that end we have scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- **Today** (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- **Tomorrow** (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.)

I once again invite you and others on your team to participate in either webinar, and please feel free to share this invitation with others in your community. For those unable to participate, I am attaching to this Field Memo Alert the PowerPoint presentation that we will use during the webinars. As noted on the last slide, we have created an e-mail address specifically to receive comment on our renewal application. Please send any feedback or comments to us at:

[ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov)



# Rhode Island's ESEA Waiver Extension

*Focus Group*

*March Meeting 10, 2014*

# Accountability Focus Group Meeting Schedule

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<b>Meeting 1- February 24<sup>th</sup> 2:00 – 4:00</b>	<b><i>Understanding the Landscape:</i></b> Overview of the opportunities and limitations of the ESEA submission and the accountability cycles affected
<b>Meeting 2- March 10<sup>th</sup>: 3:00 – 5:00</b>	<b><i>Presenting Current Thinking on Changes and Adjustments:</i></b> Options to each component of the accountability system and other related systems
<b>Meeting 3- March 24<sup>th</sup>: 2:00 – 4:00</b>	<b><i>Finalizing the Accountability System Adjustments:</i></b> Finalize the adjustments that were presented and discussed during the second meeting
<b>Meeting 4- April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2:00 – 4:00</b>	<b><i>Accountability Future State:</i></b> Present the final submission and discuss how decisions were made. Begin discussing how we would like to shape the next generation of accountability systems.

## Transition Design Principles

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- Maintain stability in the accountability system
- Account for what will be lower student performance on a new testing program
- Coordinate across all accountability systems: school, educator, and student
- Remain focused on gap closing
- Communicate broadly



# Agenda for Today

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- ▶ Transition Considerations
- ▶ Accountability for 2014 -2015
  - ▶ Elementary and Middle Schools
  - ▶ High Schools



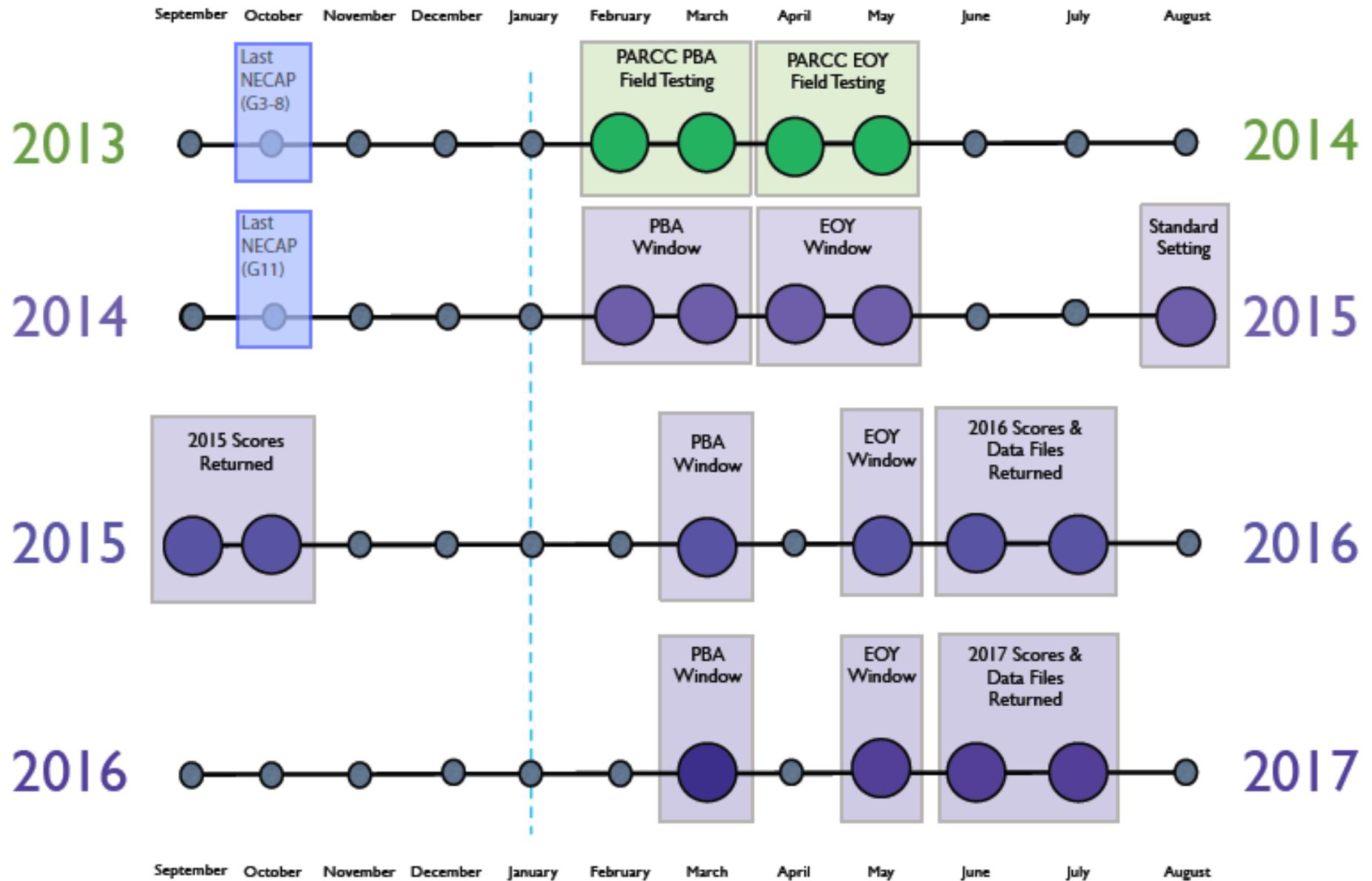
# Transition Considerations

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- ▶ Impact of moving from Fall to Spring testing
- ▶ Impact of end-of-course assessments at high school
- ▶ Alignment of school, student and educator accountability. Are there instances when they may not or should not align?
- ▶ Where do we make adjustments to the system to maintain stability? Is this at each individual measure or in the rules for designation of school classifications?
- ▶ Calculation of participation rates with end of course model
- ▶ If substantive changes (e.g., measures, points) are made to model when do they get included?



# NECAP to PARCC Transition Timeline



# Can we use our current measures in 2014-2015?

Measure		Points	2014-2015 Options
<b>Absolute Percent Proficient</b>	Elementary / Middle Schools	30 points	Yes- PARCC (would we need to reset cut points?)
	High Schools	30 points	Yes – NECAP    Maybe - PARCC
<b>Progress To 2017 Target</b>	Elementary / Middle Schools	10 points	No – PARCC set new targets
	High Schools	10 points	Yes – NECAP    No- PARCC Set new targets
<b>Achievement Gaps</b>	Elementary / Middle Schools	30 points	Yes- PARCC (would we need to reset points)
	High Schools	30 points	Yes – NECAP    Maybe -PARCC
<b>Percent of Students at Distinction Level</b>	Elementary / Middle Schools	5 points	Yes - PARCC (would we need to reset cut points and determine new level)
	High Schools	5 points	Yes – NECAP    Maybe - PARCC
<b>Growth</b>	Elementary / Middle Schools	25 points	Yes – Linking NECAP to PARCC
<b>Graduation Rates</b>	High Schools	20 points	Yes
<b>High School Scaled Score</b>	High Schools	5	Yes – NECAP    No - PARCC

# Elementary and Middle School Model

Accountability 2014-2015

# Absolute Percent Proficient

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- ▶ **PARCC Grades 3-8 Math and ELA**
  - ▶ The percent of students at a level 4 or higher on each grade level assessment and Algebra I as appropriate
- ▶ **Transition Considerations**
  - ▶ Need to set new cut points for index points
  - ▶ If we keep rules for assignment of school designations stable, account for the average percentage increase/decrease of students proficient across the state as compared to NECAP to keep the number of schools receiving pts 1-5 relatively stable



## Progress to Target

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- ▶ Progress to Target cannot be included using current NECAP targets
- ▶ 2014-2015 PARCC results will provide baseline data
- ▶ Transition Options:
  - ▶ Reallocate points (5 points) for one year to another measure and reset targets using 2014-2015 as baseline for 2015-2016 and beyond
  - ▶ Reallocate points for one year to another measure and incorporate new measure into the index in 2015-2016 and beyond
  - ▶ Incorporate a new measure into the index in 2014-2015 and beyond



# Achievement Gaps

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- ▶ **PARCC 3-8 Math and ELA**
  - ▶ Use the current performance reference and consolidated subgroups
- ▶ **Transition Consideration**
  - ▶ May need to reset cuts as gaps may appear to close because of overall decrease in students proficient. May inflate index scores early on and decrease over time as performance improves
  - ▶ May need to create new performance reference group based on PARCC data



# Proficient with Distinction

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- ▶ **PARCC 3-8 Math and ELA**

- ▶ The percent of students at a PARCC *Level 5* on each grade level assessment and Algebra I as appropriate

- ▶ **Transition Consideration**

- ▶ Reset cut points for index score taking into account shifts in performance from NECAP to PARCC



# Growth

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- ▶ **NECAP to PARCC Grades 3-8**
  - ▶ Calculate growth scores using current model linking NECAP to PARCC
- ▶ **Transition Considerations**
  - ▶ Traditional Elementary school (K-5)- 2 cohorts of students can be attributed in 2014-2015 and beyond
  - ▶ Traditional Middle School (6-8) - 2 cohorts of students can be attributed in 2014-2015. 3 cohorts of students can be attributed in 2014-2016 and beyond.
  - ▶ Can growth be calculated for Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade?
  - ▶ Cut points should not have to be reset as growth percentiles are normative





# High School Model



Accountability 2014-2015

# High School Assessments During Transition

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Grade 9	PARCC: Alg I or Geo  PARCC:ELA I	PARCC: Alg I or Geo  PARCC:ELA I	PARCC: Alg I or Geo  PARCC:ELA I	PARCC: Alg I or Geo  PARCC:ELA I	PARCC: Alg I or Geo  PARCC:ELA I
Grade 10	PARCC: Alg I, Geo, or Alg II  PARCC: ELA II	PARCC: Alg I, Geo, or Alg II  PARCC: ELA II	PARCC: Alg I, Geo, or Alg II  PARCC: ELA II	PARCC: Alg I, Geo, or Alg II  PARCC: ELA II	PARCC: Alg I, Geo, or Alg II  PARCC: ELA II
Grade 11	NECAP Census  PARCC Optional	PARCC: Alg. I, Geo, Alg II ELA III	PARCC: Alg. I, Geo, Alg II ELA III	PARCC: Alg. I, Geo, Alg II ELA III	PARCC: Alg. I, Geo, Alg II ELA III
Grade 12	NECAP Retest  PARCC Optional  Class of 2015	NECAP Retest  PARCC Optional  Class of 2016	PARCC: Geo, Alg II  Class of 2017	PARCC: Geo, Alg II  Class of 2018	PARCC: Geo, Alg II  (Class 2019 - PARCC tests since grade 8)



# Absolute Percent Proficient

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- ▶ **NECAP Grade 11:**

- ▶ No change in calculation for 2014-2015 accountability

OR

- ▶ **PARCC ELA:**

- ▶ Percent of 9th grade students proficient or higher on ELA I
  - ▶ Percent of 10th grade students proficient or higher on ELA II

- ▶ **PARCC Math:**

- ▶ The percent of 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade students proficient or higher on Algebra I or Geometry.
  - ▶ Calculation of participation rates may not meet requirements in 2014-2015.



# Progress to Target

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- ▶ Progress to Target can be included with current NECAP targets

OR

- ▶ 2014-2015 PARCC results will provide baseline data only
- ▶ Options:
  - ▶ Reallocate points (5 points) for one year to another measure and reset targets using 2014-2015 as baseline for 2015-2016 and beyond
  - ▶ Reallocate points for one year to another measure and incorporate new measure into the index in 2015-2016 and beyond
  - ▶ Incorporate a new measure into the index in 2014-2015 and beyond



# Achievement Gaps

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- ▶ **NECAP Grade 11:**

- ▶ No change in calculation

OR

- ▶ **PARCC ELA:**

- ▶ ELA I and ELA II
- ▶ Use the current performance reference and super subgroups

- ▶ **PARCC Math:**

- ▶ Algebra I and Geometry
- ▶ Use the current performance reference and consolidated subgroups

- ▶ **Transition Consideration:**

- ▶ May need to reset cuts as gaps may appear to close because of overall decrease in students proficient. May inflate index scores early on and decrease over time as performance improves



# Proficient with Distinction

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- ▶ **NECAP Grade 11:**

- ▶ No change in calculation

OR

- ▶ **PARCC ELA:**

- ▶ ELA I and ELA II
- ▶ The percent of students at a level 5 on ELA I and ELA II

- ▶ **PARCC Mathematics:**

- ▶ The percent of students at a level 5 on Algebra I and Geometry

- ▶ **Transition Consideration:**

- ▶ Reset cut points for index score taking into account shifts in performance from NECAP to PARCC



# High School Scale Score Change

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- ▶ **NECAP Grade 11:** No change in calculation
- ▶ **PARCC:** Can not calculate in 2014-2015
- ▶ **Transition Options:**
  - ▶ Use NECAP grade 11 in 2014-2015 and move to new measure in 2015-2016
  - ▶ Reallocate points from this measure to another measure(s) in 2014-2015 and move to new measure in 2015-2016
  - ▶ Move to new measure in 2014-2015. May be more limited in options in year 1 of PARCC
- ▶ PARCC is conducting research to examine implications of multiple pathways for calculating math course/assessment completion on measures of growth



# Graduation Rates

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- ▶ Calculate using current metrics.



# Other Possible Measures

Category	Possible Components	States
“College/Career Ready”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ % of students in advanced courses (AP, IB, honors)</li> <li>➤ ACT/SAT scores</li> <li>➤ % students on track to obtain professional certificate</li> <li>➤ % of students attending competitive colleges</li> <li>➤ % of students college and career ready on PARCC (Algebra II and ELA III) –No states yet</li> </ul>	KY, WI, TX, OK
“Other academic measures”	State tests in science, writing, history, Spanish (TX only)	TX, CT, CA
“Opportunities to learn”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attendance rates</li> <li>➤ Dropout rates</li> <li>➤ Chronic absenteeism rates</li> <li>➤ Student survey responses about culture of learning</li> </ul>	NM, WI, OK



## Considerations for Measures

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- ▶ Use multiple years of data for calculations
- ▶ Account for differences in populations in measures (SES, ELL, IEP)
- ▶ Account for student years in school/district
- ▶ Use measure that accounts for reducing the percentage of students in lowest performance level



**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, May 17, 2013**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. Superintendents, principals, RIDE agree to modifications to [evaluation process](#)
2. [Board of Education](#) to meet in school settings
3. Commissioner to issue [Summer Reading Challenge](#): Dive into a Book!
4. Schools honored for meeting response-rate goals on 2013 [SurveyWorks](#)

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

***Data submissions and reports:***

5. [Title I](#) data reports due **June 10**
6. Preliminary data report on students experiencing [homelessness](#) due **June 10**
7. Deadline for submission of Annual [School Health Report](#) extended to **June 3**
8. Work session scheduled on [IMS curriculum-course linking](#)
9. Data, reports on [Highly Qualified Teachers](#) available on request only

10. [Roster Verification](#) webinars scheduled for Monday, Wednesday - *Reminder*

**Common Core:**

11. RIDE conducting survey about transition to [Common Core](#) State Standards

**From other organizations**

12. [Republic of China](#) seeks partnerships with Rhode Island schools

**Attachments to this Field Memo**

Differentiated Evaluation Process 5-17-13

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**Action Item Calendar**

- May 24: [Asset Protection Plans](#) due  
June 3: [Preliminary EIS data](#) report due  
June 3: School Health Reports due (see [below](#))  
June 5: [PARCC Technology Readiness](#) data update  
June 10: Title I Local Performance Report due (see [below](#))  
June 10: Preliminary Title I eRIDE report due (see [below](#))  
June 10: Preliminary homeless data due (see [below](#))  
June 25: [EIS data](#) report due  
June 25: Final Title I eRIDE report due (see [below](#))  
June 25: Final homeless data due (see [below](#))  
July 15: [Housing-aid reimbursement](#) forms due

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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. Superintendents, principals, RIDE agree to modifications to evaluation process**

As professional educators committed to ensuring that we have excellent teachers in every classroom and excellent leaders in every school, I know that we agree about the importance of annual evaluations that provide all educators with guidance and feedback to improve teaching, learning, and leadership. I appreciate the support and the commitment that Rhode Island School Superintendents Association (RISSA) and the Rhode Island Association of School Principals (RIASP) have given to our system of educator evaluations. I also appreciate the feedback that superintendents and principals have provided to me and to the team at RIDE about ways in which we can improve and streamline the evaluation process.

As a result of this feedback and in the spirit of partnership, we have worked together over the past several months to develop a differentiated model for educator evaluations that would maintain annual evaluations for all teachers but would establish new minimum requirements for classroom observations and evaluation conferences.

This week, the Executive Board of RISSA voted unanimously to accept and support these modifications to the Rhode Island Model for Education Evaluation, and RISSA and RIASP leaders have informed their membership about this agreement. Under

this differentiated model, the minimum number of classroom observations and evaluation conferences is primarily determined by the teacher's final effectiveness rating from the previous year.

A detailed description of all the modifications that we have agreed to implement (Differentiated Evaluation Process 5-17-13) is attached to this Field Memo.

Meanwhile, we are discussing similar modifications with the Innovation Consortium, and we will keep you informed about our progress in these discussions.

I am confident that these modifications respond to concerns that superintendents and principals have raised about their capacity to fulfill the goals of the evaluation process. I am also confident that these modifications leave intact the essential goals of the evaluation process, which include focusing on teaching and learning, emphasizing growth and achievement, improving student and educator performance, and annually measuring educator effectiveness.

In particular, I am pleased by the partnership and good will that have marked our discussions about these modifications to the evaluation system. As we move forward, I am sure that, in the spirit of this agreement, we can continue working together to transform education in Rhode Island and to prepare all of our students for success.

## **2. Board of Education to meet in school settings**

Earlier this week, you received a letter from Board of Education Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso, announcing that, in September, the Board will begin holding its monthly meetings in school settings.

As Chair Mancuso noted, holding meetings in school settings will help the Board receive feedback from students, educators, and community members and will also help build public support for our work toward transforming education in Rhode Island. The previous Board of Regents held a number of its meetings in school settings, and I found this practice to be a great way for the Board members to get to know communities across the state and to hear about some of the important work going on in your schools. If you are interested in being the host for a Board meeting, please let Angela Teixeira ([angela.teixeira@ride.ri.gov](mailto:angela.teixeira@ride.ri.gov)) know, as we are in the process of creating a Board meeting schedule for the coming school year.

### **3. Commissioner to issue Summer Reading Challenge: Dive into a Book!**

As I noted to you in last week's Field Memo, I am issuing a Summer Reading Challenge in order to inspire students to complete their goals for summer reading through fun and competition in a statewide initiative.

Our team at RIDE has been in contact with the School Librarians of Rhode Island and the R.I. Office of Library & Information Services about how to design a successful challenge. The librarians inform me that every Rhode Island school establishes some form of summer-reading goals for students, and that these vary across the state, and I know that all schools have summer-reading goals as well.

My challenge, "Dive into a Book!: The Summer Reading Challenge," will be to see which school can have the highest percentage of students complete all of their summer-reading goals, as set by their school (with bonus points for those who also

meet the goals that their community library has set). Next week, I will send a message to all principals and librarians, asking those who would like to participate in the challenge to notify my office and to give me an overview of the summer-reading goals for their school. In the fall, the principals and community librarians will notify my office as to the number and percentage of students who met the challenge, and I will announce the winning school or schools.

To celebrate the success of the winning school or schools, I will skydive with the principal (or a librarian or teacher in the school), and we will invite the students to enjoy this exciting event. We have a number of details to work out over the next several weeks, but I am sure that this program will be a big success and will inspire students to dive into reading this summer.

#### **4. Schools honored for meeting response-rate goals on 2013 SurveyWorks**

As we work together to transform education in Rhode Island, it is very important that we take into account the point of view of all education stakeholders. SurveyWorks, our annual survey of students, parents, teachers, and staff members in all Rhode Island schools, is an essential part of our on-going commitment to listen to the voices of the education community.

I am pleased that this year we are able to recognize 19 schools for achieving especially high student, parent, and teacher/staff participation and response rates on 2013 SurveyWorks or for dramatically improving the response rate on the parent survey.

Congratulations to the following schools for meeting or exceeding your response-rate goals on all three surveys:

- Ashaway Elementary School (Chariho)
- Blackstone Academy Charter School
- Charlotte Woods Elementary School (Providence)
- Cottrell F. Hoxsie School (Warwick)
- Daniel D. Waterman School (Cranston)
- Edward S. Rhodes School (Cranston)
- Glen Hills Elementary School (Cranston)
- Hope Valley Elementary School (Chariho)
- Jamestown School-Melrose
- Leviton Dual Language Elementary School (Providence)
- M. Virginia Cunningham Middle School (Pawtucket)
- Nathan Bishop Middle School (Providence)
- North Smithfield High School
- Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College Charter
- Wyman School (Warwick)

I also want to congratulate these schools for dramatically improving the response rate on the parent surveys, with Dr. M.H. Sullivan School (Newport) achieving an especially high parent response rate:

- Agnes E. Little School (Pawtucket): rate increased from 39.06 percent (2012) to 61.1 percent (2013)
- Dr. M.H. Sullivan School: rate increased from 12.96 percent to 84.2 percent
- Frank D. Spaziano Avenue Elementary (Providence): rate increased from 9.6 percent to 41.3 percent; and
- George J. West Elementary School (Providence): rate increased from 38.8 percent to 45 percent.

We will contact the principals of all winning schools by Monday (May 20) to inform them of their awards, which will include various gift cards and prizes. Congratulations to students, teachers, and leaders at all the prize-winning schools and districts!

### **From RIDE**

#### ***Data submissions and reports:***

##### **5. Title I data reports due June 10**

Title I program data are annually collected by RIDE in order to fulfill federal reporting requirements. Any students who received services in a Title I, Part A program must be reported in the enrollment census. This reporting requirement includes students served in both Targeted Assistance Programs (TAS) and Title I School-Wide Programs (SWP).

In the past, RIDE has collected this data through a separate collection, the Title I Local Performance Report; however, starting with the current school year, Title I TAS and SWP participation data will now be collected through eRIDE. For this implementation year, RIDE will *also* collect the Title I Local Performance Report in order to verify the accuracy of the Title I program data reported through the enrollment census. Copies of the Title I Local Performance Report have been e-mailed to LEA Title I coordinators.

Please note that:

- this reporting is due by June 25, with a preliminary data submission on **June 10**, before the close of the school year,

- while LEA program staff are available for clarification requests;
- the Title I Local Performance Report will be collected by RIDE Title I program staff, with a due date of June 10, in order to match the enrollment census reporting timeframe; and
  - School Year 2012-13 participation data for nonpublic-school students receiving equitable Title I services will be reported only through the Title I Local Performance Report. The changeover to eRIDE for this piece of the Title I reporting will be implemented starting with the data collection during the coming school year (2013-14).

#### **6. Preliminary data report on students experiencing homelessness due June 10**

The U.S. Department of Education requires that *all* LEAs collect and report data on students experiencing homelessness. This report contains critical data that inform our federal reporting and that affect federal funding decisions. Please remind your homeless-education liaison to work with your data manager in order to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of this data submission.

The preliminary data submission for the Homeless Program file is **June 10**. RIDE program staff will work with LEA homeless-education liaisons to address any data-quality clarifications and to make any needed revisions. Final homeless-data submissions are due by June 25.

#### **7. Deadline for submission of Annual School Health Report extended to June 3**

According to the Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs, Section 2.5, all LEAs and nonpublic-school authorities are required to submit to the Commissioner of Education and to the Director of Health on an annual basis a report pertaining to LEA or school compliance with school health and safety statutes, regulations, and protocols.

The deadline for submission of your report had been Monday (May 20), but we have extended this deadline. Please complete the report by accessing it through the eRIDE system and submit by **June 3**. Failure to submit this report will result in an assumption of non-compliance with state and federal regulations and statutes. The superintendent or nonpublic-school authority must sign off on the report before electronic submission via eRIDE.

For review of the Annual School Health Report and for assistance in understanding what is required, please see the [Annual School Health Report Tutorial](#).

If you need technical support, contact the RIDE HelpDesk, at [helpdesk@ride.ri.gov](mailto:helpdesk@ride.ri.gov).

If you have any questions regarding the content of the questions, please contact Midge Sabatini, at 222-8952 or [Midge.Sabatini@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Midge.Sabatini@ride.ri.gov).

## **8. Work session scheduled on IMS curriculum-course linking**

We invite you to join us for an Instructional Management System (IMS) work session on Friday, May 24, from 9 a.m. to noon, in Room 312 at the East Providence High School Career and Technical Center, 1098 Pawtucket Ave. This session is not a training session but a work session, during which LEA program

and technical staff can complete tasks in the IMS, such as curriculum-course linking, with access to RIDE staff. The session will be held in a computer lab, so participants will not need to bring laptops. However, participants should bring the information they'll need to link courses to the corresponding curriculum in the IMS. For elementary schools, this may be a list of courses and information on the curriculum for each grade. For secondary schools, this might include a course catalog or its equivalent. Attendance is limited to 20, so please register through e-RIDE. For more information on this session, contact Laura Kacewicz, at [laura.kacewicz@ride.ri.gov](mailto:laura.kacewicz@ride.ri.gov).

### **9. Data, reports on Highly Qualified Teachers available on request only**

The data and report on the percentage of teachers who are designated as 'Highly Qualified' will not be available in eCert as we are transitioning to the new eCert system. Therefore, LEAs requiring data on Highly Qualified Teachers in order to submit their CRP application should contact Mary Keenan ([mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov](mailto:mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov)). Upon your request, we will send you by e-mail the data in the form of a report.

### **10. Roster Verification webinars scheduled for Monday, Wednesday - *Reminder***

The Roster Verification process in the Educator Performance Support System (EPSS) will open for use beginning on Wednesday (May 22), with a teacher-course-student data-review period for principals. Teachers (in grades 3 through 7, considered contributing educators in English language arts or mathematics) will be able to verify their rosters beginning May 29. Principals can

sign up for a Roster Verification webinar by using the registration links below:

**Monday** (May 20), 1 - 2 p.m.

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/123542750>

**Wednesday** (May 22) 10 - 11 a.m.

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/389404742>

***Common Core:***

**11. RIDE conducting survey about transition to Common Core State Standards**

RIDE would like to hear from educators and instructional leaders about successes, challenges, and plans for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in their LEAs and schools. We will aggregate and share with you the information that we gather, and we will use the information to assist LEAs and educators with their current needs and with future efforts to transition to the Common Core State Standards.

Please complete the leader survey using the link below, and please forward this link to other leaders in your LEA:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CCSS-Transition-Leader>

Please forward the survey link below to educators in your LEA:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CCSS-Transition-Educator>

The survey window runs through Friday, June 7. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

If you have questions about this survey or if you need further information, please contact Kate Schulz, in our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum, at [kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8489.

### **From other organizations**

#### **12. Republic of China seeks partnerships with Rhode Island schools**

Cynthia Huang, Director of the Education Division of the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office, Boston, writes:

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you a new website launched by the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), to encourage International Educational Exchange for primary and secondary schools.

In April 2011, the Ministry proposed a white paper entitled *The White Paper on International Education for Primary and Secondary School* with the goal of preparing primary- and secondary-school students in Taiwan for globalized living and working environments. In order to support the internationalization of primary and secondary schools in Taiwan, the Ministry has set up an International Exchange Window online, at <http://ietw.moe.gov.tw/>, to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on international-exchange opportunities for both Taiwan and international schools seeking to establish partnerships. I would like ... to encourage those interested to take advantage of this online

platform. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact our office, at (617) 737-2055.

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

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

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, March 14, 2014**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

1. Rhode Island receives approval for [Race to the Top](#) no-cost extension
2. [Next year's junior class](#) to take NECAP, not PARCC assessments
3. RIDE developing options for cyclical structures within annual [educator-evaluation systems](#)
4. [Housing aid](#) available for repairs needed for health and safety
5. Families informed about [PARCC Field Test](#)
6. [NECAP retest](#) process completed
7. Presentation scheduled on [Common Core](#), PARCC

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

***Health and Safety:***

8. National Youth [HIV and AIDS Awareness Day](#) to be held April 10

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

9. [Information released](#) on federal budget, early learning, FAFSAs, nutrition, poster contest, emergency preparedness
10. New round of [Investing in Innovation](#) grants announced
11. Schools, students encouraged to sign up for updates on First Lady's visit to [China](#)

### **From other federal agencies**

12. U.S. Department of Labor awarding grants for education of [disadvantaged youth](#)

### **From other organizations**

13. College Board seeking nominations for [Guidance and Admission](#) Assembly Council
14. ResilientKids to hold workshop on [mindfulness](#)
15. [Boston Globe](#) offers classroom materials to Rhode Island educators

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### **Action Item Calendar**

March 28: [Distinguished Educator](#) recommendations due

March 28: [Textbook](#) lists due

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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. Rhode Island receives approval for Race to the Top no-cost extension**

Over the course of the four years of our Race to the Top federal grant, we have used the \$75 million to support transforming education in Rhode Island. Among the major initiatives the grant has supported are:

- professional development for educators on transition to the Common Core State Standards,
- development by educators of curriculum in English language arts and mathematics aligned with the standards,
- professional development for educators on the use of data,
- implementation of annual evaluations for all educators,
- induction program and supports for new teachers,
- academy for training aspiring principals,
- development and implementation of virtual learning math modules for students.

At this time, Rhode Island has met almost all goals in our Race to the Top application, and the state and all 52 participating school districts have expended almost all of the \$75 million grant

funding. This entire project has been a success thanks to the ongoing and extensive partnerships formed among RIDE and the teams from your LEA and all other participating LEAs. I am deeply grateful for your hard work and support as we have implemented these many new systems and initiatives over the past four years.

On Wednesday, we learned that the U.S. Department of Education has approved our request for a no-cost extension to our Race to the Top Scope of Work, which will give us additional time to complete a few specific projects that RIDE initiated using funds from the grant. As its name implies, the no-cost extension will entail no additional cost to Rhode Island; rather, it gives us an additional year to expend remaining funds and to achieve our Race to the Top goals.

The U.S. Department of Education has approved our request to use \$2.4 million in remaining funds. Of this total, \$1,952,000 will enable RIDE to complete work on a system, now known as the Instructional Support System, that will provide all educators with support and resources, including:

- information to better serve our students;
- a bank of Common Core-aligned items, for classroom use;
- model lesson plans and units of study;
- assessments for measuring student progress (Interim Assessments); and
- other resources and information that support teaching and learning.

The Instructional Management System is still available for your use. The redesign of the system, which will be called the Instructional Support System, is under way; phase 1 will be ready

for use in June, and the redesign will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

As our team discussed with you yesterday at the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association general meeting, you have met your commitments regarding this Race to the Top-funded initiative, so no further steps on your part are necessary for you to begin using the Instructional Support System. Thanks to the no-cost extension, however, you will have the opportunity to request unspent Race to the Top funds to further your expertise in the use of the data and resources in the Instructional Support System.

Our no-cost extension provides funding for two additional components of the Race to the Top Scope of Work:

- \$200,000 for develop a “platform” to provide educators with better access to professional development; and
- approximately \$280,000 to provide additional professional development to educators preparing to work in the lowest-achieving schools.

Our Race to the Top team will communicate further with you regarding potential changes to your approved Scope of Work, the rollout schedule of the Instructional Support System, and opportunities for further professional development regarding data, resources, and support for struggling schools.

I am very pleased to say that, thanks to this no-cost extension, Rhode Island is on course to expend all Race to the Top funds and to meet the goals agreed to in our Race to the Top Scope of Work.

## **2. Next year’s junior class to take NECAP, not PARCC assessments**

One topic we discussed this week at the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association general meeting concerned our testing schedule for the next school year (2014-15). I know there has been some confusion in the field, so I want to clarify the matter: Next year's junior class (Class of 2016) will take the NECAP assessments in the fall (October 2014); next year's junior class will *not* be required to take the PARCC assessments and the students will not be "double-tested." Next year's freshman and sophomore classes will take PARCC assessments, beginning in the Spring of 2015. These students (Class of 2017 and Class of 2018) will be the first to take the PARCC assessments as part of both our annual state assessments and our diploma system.

As you may be aware, we will describe these accountability-system revisions in the application we will submit to the U.S. Department of Education for an extension of our Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver. To help guide us in developing this application, we are working with a focus group, which includes superintendents and heads of school. I am interested in any and all feedback from the field, so if you have any comments or concerns about these revisions to our accountability system please feel free to share your concerns with me. Your opinions (including support for our transition to the PARCC assessments) will help us prepare our request for a waiver extension.

### **3. RIDE developing options for cyclical structures within annual educator-evaluation systems**

Last year, based on feedback we received, we put in place the option for differentiated educator evaluations, which has reduced the workload and streamlined the process for evaluators – but we know that there is more to do. Over the past several months, we

have been working with folks from a handful of LEAs and we have been using feedback from our mid-year educator-evaluation surveys to review the differentiated model for educator evaluations. Our goal is to see how we can create cyclical structures (something many have been advocating) within the system of annual evaluations. We plan to come up with some options for LEAs, which you will be able to try out locally, as early as the coming school year. We will be providing you with more information about these cyclical structures in future communications.

#### **4. Housing aid available for repairs needed for health and safety**

You may have seen a news story last week that reported on unhealthy conditions in one of our public schools. The report implied that state funding (housing aid) would not be available for repair work in this school because of the current moratorium on school construction. Please keep in mind that maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff members is our highest priority. The current moratorium on school construction does allow for construction or repairs necessary “for immediate health and safety reasons,” (RIGL 16-7-41.1) and several such emergency projects have received approval during the time of the moratorium.

As a reminder from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies, state law requires annual school-facility inspections by local or state building inspectors and fire chiefs, as well as by other authorities having jurisdiction. Establishing and maintaining high standards for [indoor environmental quality](#) requires ongoing maintenance and operations efforts involving all members of the educational community. On our website, you can access applicable healthy

school-building laws and regulations, posted under our [Coordinated School Health Program](#) and [School Construction Program](#).

## **5. Families informed about PARCC Field Test**

As we prepare for the beginning of the PARCC Field Test on **March 24**, I have prepared this letter to all friends of education, which we will distribute over the next few days through our list-serve and on social media:

As we continue working together to transform education in Rhode Island, one of our top priorities has been adopting college- and career-ready standards that clearly state what our students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Over the past three years, we have worked with teachers and school leaders across the state to prepare for the new Common Core State Standards, and I am pleased that this year these standards are guiding instruction in all of our public schools.

Another priority for us has been developing assessments to help us see whether students have mastered the Common Core State Standards. In partnership with educators in 16 other states, we have been working for three years to develop a new set of assessments called PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). Next year, our schools will transition to these new PARCC assessments. Students in grades 3 through 10 will take PARCC assessments in the spring of 2015. (Students in grade 11 will take the NECAP, in October 2014.)

To help everyone get ready for PARCC, about 9,000 students in most of our schools will participate in a PARCC “field test,” beginning on Monday, March 24. For most participating students, this practice test will take a total of about 3 to 5 hours, over two or three sessions. The experience of participating in the practice run will give students and teachers the opportunity to become more familiar with PARCC, helping to get them ready for the actual assessments next year. Keep in mind that there will be no report of results from this year’s practice run, so there is no need for any anxiety about performance during the field test. And by the way – we expect glitches to occur during the practice run. We want to iron out the bugs now so that everything will go more smoothly when we roll out PARCC assessments next year.

I truly believe PARCC assessments will improve teaching and learning in our state in several ways. Like our current assessments, PARCC assessments will ask students to provide written responses to many questions, giving students the opportunity to show what they know and can do. Unlike our current assessments, however, PARCC will be offered in the spring – in line with the materials students are taking in their current classes. Unlike the NECAP, students will take PARCC assessments during two separate testing windows – but the total number of testing hours will be very similar to the current testing schedule: about 9 hours per student, depending on grade level. (One difference is that PARCC will assess writing proficiency in grades 3 through 11, not in three grades only.)

For most students, PARCC will be computer-based and therefore more engaging for students. Teachers will receive

results much more quickly than they received NECAP results, so they can use information from PARCC to better guide instruction and to support individual students. Of course the questions on PARCC line up with the standards in the Common Core, so the PARCC material will be familiar to our teachers and to the students taking the assessments. We have posted a number of helpful materials on PARCC assessments on our [website](#), and the PARCC consortium [website](#) has important materials on the field test as well.

Our students have made significant progress over the past five years, and I believe the Common Core and the new PARCC assessments will help us continue on the right course in the coming years. The PARCC field test will be an important step on this exciting journey!

## **6. NECAP retest process completed**

On Tuesday, we completed the NECAP retake process for high-school seniors who had not yet fulfilled the state-assessment component of the Diploma System. I am extremely grateful for the excellent organization and the spirit of hope and accomplishment that our assessment team encountered in school districts across the state. The hard work and positive attitude from you, your staff members, and your students made this process proceed smoothly. Every report I have received has emphasized that the students and staff members took this retest opportunity seriously, that students were trying hard to show their best work throughout the testing, and that many students felt proud and optimistic on the completion of the assessments. We will have results for you by the end of next month, and I believe that many students will show improvement and that the

Class of 2014 will be more ready for success beyond high school than any other graduating class from our state.

## **7. Presentation scheduled on Common Core, PARCC**

The Rhode Island ASCD has announced a professional-development opportunity, “Keeping Up with the Core: What Rhode Island Educators Need to Know to Implement Common Core Thoughtfully and Prepare Purposefully for PARCC,” to be held on **Wednesday** (March 19), from 4 to 5:30 p.m., at the Cranston Public Library, Sockanosset Cross Road.

The RI-ASCD notes that this high-level presentation and discussion will provide an overview of what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) mean for our students and our classrooms and how the CCSS prepares our students for college and challenging careers. The presenters will provide an overview of the latest information that Rhode Island educators should know to implement CCSS thoughtfully and to prepare purposefully for PARCC assessments. The presentation will also discuss and model ways to discuss the CCSS with parents and the community. A question-and-answer period will allow for dialogue on common issues related to CCSS implementation. Handouts will be provided. Register at [www.riascd.org](http://www.riascd.org)

**From RIDE**

***Health and Safety:***

**8. National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day to be held  
April 10**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, in 2010, young people aged 13 to 24 accounted for 26 percent of all new HIV infections in the United States, and nearly half of the 19 million new sexually transmitted diseases reported each year are among young people ages 15 to 24. In an effort to bring attention to this issue, **April 10** has been designated as National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day. The 2014 theme is: Engaging Youth Voices in the AIDS/HIV Response. Today's young people are the first generation that has never known a world without HIV and AIDS. An AIDS-free generation is not possible without our nation's youth. Please feel free to share the HIV/AIDS Awareness resources that are available on the Advocates for Youth website, at <http://amplifyyourvoice.org/nyhaad> with your school staff. The Department of Health has additional resources for HIV prevention, at:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/healthyliving/sexualhealth/about/safersex/index.php>

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

#### **9. Information released on federal budget, early learning, FAFSAs, nutrition, poster contest, emergency preparedness**

Please see these notices from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

#### **Education Budget**

On March 4, after sending his [annual budget request](#) to Congress, President Obama visited Powell Elementary School in Washington, D.C., highlighting the school's

preschool program as a model for the nation. “These kids may not be the most excited people in town on budget day,” the President said, “but my budget is designed with their generation and future generations in mind. In my State of the Union address, I laid out an agenda to restore opportunity for all people... The budget I sent Congress this morning lays out how we’ll implement this agenda in a balanced and responsible way. It’s a roadmap for creating jobs with good wages and expanding opportunity for all Americans. And at a time when our deficits have been cut in half, it allows us to meet our obligations to future generations without leaving them a mountain of debt.”

The President is requesting \$68.6 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Education, an increase of \$1.3 billion – or 1.9 percent – over the Fiscal Year 2014 level. “The President’s budget request reflects his strong belief that education is a vital investment in the nation’s economic competitiveness, in its people, and in its communities,” Secretary Duncan said. “Despite the encouraging progress we’ve seen, wide opportunity and achievement gaps continue to hurt many families, which puts our nation’s economy and future at risk.”

The President proposed a new initiative called [Race to the Top-Equity and Opportunity](#), which would create incentives for states and school districts to drive comprehensive change in identifying and closing both achievement and opportunity gaps. Grants would enhance data systems to sharpen the focus on the greatest disparities and invest in strong teachers and leaders in high-need schools. Grants would also support other strategies that mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty, such as expanded learning time,

access to rigorous coursework, and comprehensive student supports. (See also [Equity of Opportunity](#).)

The President also proposed the new [ConnectEDucators program](#), which would provide funding to help teachers and principals better leverage new resources made available through technology to improve college- and career-ready instruction and personalize learning. Technology can help educators teach to more rigorous standards, but technology alone cannot improve student learning. Educators must know how to make the best use of technology – such as creating and sharing high-quality open digital content – and how to use data to help students learn. (See also [Teachers and Leaders](#).)

Among the continued priorities, targeted to strengthen the education pipeline from cradle-to-career, are:

- making high-quality preschool, infant and toddler care, and home visiting available for children ([more](#));
- improving affordability, quality, and success in postsecondary education ([more](#)); and
- making schools safer and creating positive learning environments ([more](#)).

Want to dig deeper? Among the resources online are a [press release](#), a [blog post](#), the [budget summary](#), and [fact sheets on cross-cutting issues](#). Furthermore, one can [view video](#) from the agency's budget briefing for stakeholders and [listen](#) to the agency's press call.

## **Early Learning**

Last week, Secretary Duncan and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius [visited the newest preschool](#) among the Child and Family Network Centers in Alexandria, Virginia, to observe a quality bilingual program in action and discuss the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2015. He proposed \$500 million – double last year's funding – for Preschool Development Grants and reintroduced the Preschool for All initiative, with an initial \$1.3-billion investment. There is also additional funding requests for Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants, and evidence-based home visiting.

This week, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services held a stakeholder briefing on federal investments in early learning and development ([view video](#)).

Also, both agencies are seeking additional input on the 2014 Preschool Development Grants competition through a [dedicated website](#), as well as a public meeting on Thursday (March 20), from 3:30 to 5 p.m., in Washington, D.C. ([watch live](#)).

### **Student Loans**

Last week, at an event with the First Lady at Coral Reef High School, President Obama laid out [details of his plan](#) to equip all Americans with the education and skills they need to compete in today's global economy and launched a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion initiative to give more students the opportunity to attend, afford, and graduate from college. "Unfortunately, there are still a lot of young people all across the country who say the cost of college is holding them back," he asserted. "Some of you may have sat around the kitchen table with your

parents, wondering about whether you'll be able to afford it. FAFSA is – by far, the easiest way to answer that question.”

Under the [FAFSA Completion Initiative](#), the U. S. Department of Education will partner with states so that they can identify individual students who have not completed the FAFSA. States can then use this limited information to support school and district efforts to increase FAFSA completion, starting in the 2014-15 school year. These efforts build on the success of a pilot project launched by the agency in 2010 working directly with about 100 districts. (Note: In a [letter to the nation's governors](#), Secretary Duncan explains the history, requirements, and procedures for this initiative.)

### **Healthy Lunchtime Challenge**

The First Lady is again challenging America's most creative junior chefs to put their talents to use and whip up delicious lunchtime recipes. The third “[Healthy Lunchtime Challenge and Kids' State Dinner](#)” invites children, ages 8 to 12, and their parents or guardians, to create and submit an original lunch recipe that is healthy, affordable, and tasty. All recipes must adhere to the guidance that supports the U.S.

Department of Agriculture's [MyPlate](#). Recipes must also represent each of the food groups, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy foods, with fruits and vegetables making up roughly half of the plate or recipe. Fifty-six children and their parent or guardian - one pair from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories – will be flown to Washington, D.C., to attend a Kids' State Dinner at the White House, during which a selection of the winning

recipes will be served. Recipes may be submitted online through **April 5**.

### **Poster Contest**

The White House invites elementary- and middle-school students to submit original [poster designs](#) for the 2014 Easter Egg Roll. This year's theme, "Hop into Healthy, Swing into Shape," promotes the First Lady's [Let's Move!](#) initiative to help kids grow up healthy and reach their full potential. The deadline for submissions is **March 21**, and the winning design will be part of the White House's 2014 Easter Egg Roll program.

### **Emergency Preparation**

Communities are better prepared to withstand an emergency and recover quickly when everyone is involved. Yet, despite an increase in weather-related disasters, nearly 70 percent of Americans have not participated in a preparedness drill or exercise – aside from a fire drill – at their home, school, or workplace in the past two years. In an effort to continue building resilience, the federal family is pleased to announce [America's PrepareAthon!](#). The first America's PrepareAthon! National Day of Action is April 30. It will focus on preparing individuals, organizations, and communities for tornados, hurricanes, flooding, and wildfires. (Note: All are invited to participate in a webinar – Tuesday ([March 18](#)) or Thursday ([March 20](#)) – to learn more about the campaign and ways to be involved.)

## **10. New round of Investing in Innovation grants announced**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement:

The Office of Innovation and Improvement has published a Notice Inviting Applications for awards up to \$3 million each in the “Development” category of the 2014 [Investing in Innovation](#) (i3) grant competition. In its fifth round of competition, the i3 program continues its aim to develop and expand practices that accelerate student achievement and prepare all students to succeed in college and careers. This year’s areas of focus include English Learners, students with disabilities, and technology-enabled learning, among others.

**11. Schools, students encouraged to sign up for updates on First Lady’s visit to China**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership:

The First Lady will travel to China from Wednesday (March 19) through March 26. During the trip to China, as on previous international trips to Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, the First Lady will be focusing on the power and importance of education, both in her own life and in the lives of young people in both countries.

She will also be visiting important historical and cultural sites in China, and will [share](#) with students in the U.S. the stories of the students she meets in China, as well as interesting facts about China’s history and culture – emphasizing the importance of students learning from one

another globally. The First Lady is encouraging students and classrooms across the U.S. to follow her trip by [signing up](#) for updates throughout the visit. View the First Lady's message to students [here](#).

[PBS LearningMedia](#) and Discovery Education will offer engagement opportunities for young people surrounding the trip, along with resources available for U.S. classrooms that explore the culture, geography, current events, and people of China.

If you know of any high school students that want to get involved, have them sign up to join live webinars and opportunities to ask questions that will be answered by the first lady.

### **From other federal agencies**

#### **12. U.S. Department of Labor awarding grants for education of disadvantaged youth**

The U.S. Department of Labor will award YouthBuild grants to organizations to oversee the provision of education, occupational skills training, and employment services to disadvantaged youth in their communities while performing meaningful work and service. The program addresses affordable housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership development. The application deadline is April 22. For more information, click [here](#).

### **From other organizations**

### **13. College Board seeking nominations for Guidance and Admission Assembly Council**

The College Board is seeking nominations for two member positions on the Guidance and Admission Assembly Council. The committee is in search of experienced professionals who are knowledgeable about College Board programs and services. Individuals who have been active volunteers in College Board regional activities might be particularly well qualified for nomination. Information about the council and nomination forms are available [here](#). The nomination deadline is **April 22**.

### **14. ResilientKids to hold workshop on mindfulness**

A Rhode Island nonprofit, ResilientKids, is working with 1,300 students in nine Rhode Island public schools, most of them in high-need districts, teaching mindfulness and yoga as part of the school day. Students and teachers report excellent results - increased focus, reduced stress, fewer behavioral referrals.

ResilientKids is offering a workshop for teachers, principals, social workers, parents, guidance counselors, psychologists, and school nurses, featuring two national leaders in mindfulness in education. The workshop has two goals: explore the concept of mindfulness and how it can be applied to support adults working in your school, and engage in hands-on learning about mindfulness concepts and techniques.

The [workshop](#) will take place on Friday, **April 11**, from 8 a.m. to noon, at the Squantum Association, 947 Veterans Memorial Parkway, East Providence.

To learn more about ResilientKids, see:

<http://www.resilientkids.org>

**15. Boston Globe offers classroom materials to Rhode Island educators**

Please see this message from The Boston Globe:

[The Boston Globe News in Education \(NIE\) program](#) is pleased to extend an exciting offer to Rhode Island educators and their students.

Thanks to the generosity of private donors and corporate sponsors, Boston Globe NIE digital classroom subscriptions and educational resources are available free of charge to Rhode Island teachers in kindergarten through grade 12.

Teachers can register for their free Globe NIE subscriptions at:

<http://nieonline.com/bostonglobe/order.cfm>.

The registration process is quick and easy. Once registered, teachers and their students will have 24/7 access to the following:

- The Boston Globe e-paper, which includes translation into 12 languages and the ability to listen to individual articles
- BostonGlobe.com, which includes archived articles from 1872 to present.

In addition to their NIE subscriptions, teachers will have full access to Boston Globe NIE Common Core lesson plans, a weekly Boston Globe news quiz and newsletter, daily science webcasts, a Words in the News vocabulary quiz generated by grade level, a caption contest for editorial cartoons, and much more.

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

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

## Attachment 13: Part 2 - Consultation with Public at Large

**Rhode Island Department of Education**

**Final Report for the  
Rhode Island  
GE Common Core  
Communications Grant**

**April 22, 2014**

Contact:  
Kimberly Bright, Chief of Staff  
(401) 222-8705



## Overview of the Project

### Overall Purpose

The overall purpose of this project, which the GE Foundation funded through a grant to the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE), was to help parents and the community at large understand what the Common Core State Standards mean for our students and our classrooms and how the Common Core State Standards prepare our students for college and for challenging careers. The anti-Common Core movement has been vocal in some communities on Rhode Island, and the materials and outreach activities made possible through this grant have helped alleviate concerns and bring the focus back to what the Common Core State Standards are and how they will benefit students in Rhode Island.

As we stated in our grant application, we would use the funds from the grant to focus on:

- making materials on the Common Core available and accessible through every Rhode Island public school and library;
- providing training on the Common Core, similar to the transition workshops that RIDE has held for educators, to Rhode Island residents;
- providing government and business leaders with materials on the Common Core; and
- encouraging Rhode Islanders to download the Common Core app.

### Target Audiences

The target audiences were parents and the community. As the project progressed, we began to focus in particular on communities that were beginning to see some anti-Common Core movement so that local and state leadership would have the facts and understanding needed to make informed decisions.

### Components of the Project:

- develop a cadre of Common Core Ambassadors, drawn from the membership of our extant and active PARCC Educator Leadership Cadre, to spread the word about the Common Core;
- develop and implement a communications campaign, which an outreach specialist would coordinate and which the Ambassadors would lead, using social media, broadcast media, electronic media, earned media, public forums, and workshops;
- develop materials for the Ambassadors to use regarding the Common Core, including video clips that show how the Common Core is bringing about changes and improvements in Rhode Island classrooms;
- build up the “Ready – Set – Go” Common Core initiative and link this initiative more directly to the RIDE website and to the Commissioner’s social-media sites; and

- schedule and manage public forums on the Common Core for elected officials, business leaders, and the public at large.

### **Updates Since Interim Report of July 2013**

Originally, the RIDE website, the “Ready – Set – Go” Common Core Facebook page, and the Commissioner’s e-mails responding to members of the public and her posts on social media were the primary methods of interacting with the public regarding the Common Core State Standards. RIDE had only one web page devoted to providing resources for families and to providing information to the public at large on what the Common Core would look like in Rhode Island (there were several additional pages for educators and other pages that related to PARCC assessments, which are aligned with the Common Core). RIDE has now developed a more robust set of [web pages](#) on the Common Core to provide information not only to educators but to the community at large.

### **Partners**

RIDE partnered with the Rhode Island Foundation, which has served as the fiscal agent for this grant. RIDE also put forward a request for proposals (RFP) for a communications firm to develop communications and handout materials, to train the Ambassadors, to handle logistics for public forums, and otherwise to coordinate the project; Public Consulting Group (PCG) was the vendor RIDE selected to provide those services.



## Problems and Challenges

### Strategies Developed

The strategy RIDE developed was to bring the information directly to parents and to the community through local outreach sessions where local school or district administrators would be on hand to provide information and where the Ambassadors could answer questions about the Common Core. We developed handouts and communications materials that were designed primarily for parents, and we had these materials translated into Spanish and Portuguese. We also developed a PowerPoint for teachers about the Common Core, outlining how to communicate with parents about the Common Core and about the shifts in classroom instruction. We developed videos that focus on five themes, and we incorporated into these videos footage and statements from local educators, students, and community members so as to provide a more familiar context for the Common Core.

### Issues Solved

Due to the nature of how the media and the public pay attention to issues, communications on the Common Core is a work in progress; the issue seems to be ongoing, therefore requiring additional support to maintain the positive momentum that this project has generated. Through feedback from the forum hosts, RIDE representatives, and the Ambassadors attending the forums, we believe that overall the events have had the intended effect of increasing parent and community awareness of the Common Core and of the educational shifts in the classroom. At a local level, anecdotal feedback has shown that the sessions and materials have been helpful to school districts and to parents in starting or guiding the conversation and in providing resources to alleviate concerns that arose from misinformation.

### Potential Use for Additional Funds

Since the sessions overall have been effective in meeting their purpose, we would like to schedule additional outreach events available during the first several months of the next school year. We would expect the outcome to be similar: increased awareness for parents and others about the Common Core and discussion of ways that districts can reach out to parents at the local level to continue the conversation and information-sharing, particularly if there are specific concerns raised in the forums.

### Lessons Learned

Other states might find the resources and materials RIDE has developed to be helpful in supporting their own Common Core communications initiatives; RIDE could also potentially advise and consult with others to help them organize outreach sessions or train-the-trainer sessions to prepare their own Ambassador teams to lead local forums.

### Potential Improvements

As the project has progressed, we have had the opportunity to learn what content, phrasing, or context has proven to be especially effective when communicating about the Common Core – and what has not. This knowledge has helped us to inform the Ambassadors as they prepare to lead forums – particularly sessions at which some issues are more sensitive.

### Sustainability

The materials RIDE has developed will be available for districts, schools, and teachers to use and to share with parents. There is no additional funding outside of this grant to support any public forums or outreach or the development of materials. We have requested approval to use the remaining funds from the GE Foundation grant to support additional public forums in the fall.

## **Analysis of the Project**

### **Achieving Intended Impact**

We have been moving in a positive direction, but there are still some Rhode Islanders who continue to oppose the Common Core and who are very vocal in their opposition and there are still some groups that send one or two anti-Common Core attendees to the public forums; though questions from these people can be a detractor, as their stance can be aggressive, when responses are handled skillfully this opposition has provided the opportunity to correct the misinterpretations and false information that is often the basis for their questions.

### **Allocating Additional Funds**

As noted above, we would like to continue scheduling these forums and outreach events during the first several months of the next school year.

### **Implementing the Common Core**

There have been several initiatives that have jointly supported the implementation and transition, each focusing on different stakeholder groups. First, implementation of the Common Core began with introducing educators to the Common Core so that they would be informed when parents or other members of the community reached out to them. (Race to the Top funds for study of the standards funded this initiative.) In addition, RIDE has worked with school districts to ensure that they have the means and the resources to make the transition to the Common Core in a thoughtful manner. (Race to the Top funds for curriculum development funded this initiative, which RIDE managed through mini-grants to school districts.) Finally, though the public had been aware of the transition to the Common Core, we implemented a more targeted communications initiative through this grant in order to reach out to parents and to the general public through forums, through materials, and through videos that we produced.

### **Sharing Resources**

We are willing to share our developed materials (flyers, rack cards, videos) with anyone who would like to view or use them to communicate about the Common Core; however, the resources (handouts, presentations) would need to be customized to the needs of each state, as they contain information that is specific to Rhode Island. The Common Core videos are entirely focused on Rhode Island, as the footage and statements are meant to show a local context as expressed by Rhode Island educators, students, and other community-members.

### **Involving Others**

Our Common Core Ambassadors, who lead the outreach sessions and who provide input on the design of the PowerPoints, are all current Rhode Island educators: teachers, school and district administrators, content specialists. Parents are the primary audience for the forums. We also extended the invitation to host outreach events to the higher-education community, and we have one session currently scheduled with higher education.



## Supportive Data

### **Increasing Awareness**

Our analysis of the success of the project is not supported through quantitative data, as there were no measures in place to track public knowledge and attitudes before and after the period of the grant. We updated our Facebook page and our website, and Commissioner Gist Tweeted about the various resources (e.g., the Common Core videos we developed through this grant) and about the projects. We created two new web pages showcasing support for the Common Core in Rhode Island. Originally, we had only one main page focusing on the transition; now we have three web pages. Our Facebook page began as Common Core-related but then shifted to Race to the Top topics; now, our Facebook page has returned to its initial focus on the Common Core and on PARCC assessments, which are aligned with the Common Core. We shared the Common Core videos that we developed through Commissioner Gist's use of social media, and her messages have been picked up and sent out more broadly by partner organizations such as PARCCPlace and by others.

### **Increasing Interest**

Since the beginning of this project, there have been numerous media events and newspaper articles on the Common Core in Rhode Island; the Common Core has also become a significant topic on social media, both in responses to Tweets and Facebook posts and through an increase in "likes" for our Ready-Set-Go Facebook page.

### **Changing Attitudes**

We have seen a somewhat positive shift in attitudes toward the Common Core, as more people are informed about the Common Core; however, the information supporting that conclusion is anecdotal and qualitative.

### **Providing Online Access**

Our Common Core page has received more than 8,000 page-views (approximately 1,200 per month) since September, when the public portion of this initiative began. We have no information available on the number of downloads, nor on the number of e-mails sent and viewed.

### **Providing Materials**

We produced five Common Core videos; there have been several hundred views of each video since we posted them on our website at the end of February. We have redesigned our Common Core web page, however, so the view count is imprecise. We have no information available on the number of mailers or posters printed.

### **Training Teachers**

Through this grant, we have not trained teachers; through our Race to the Top grant, however, more than 6,000 Rhode Island teachers participated in workshops on transition to the Common Core.

### **Scheduling Public Forums**

The typical format for the public forums has been a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. Several of our forums included panels of local educators who were on hand to answer questions. Participation in the forums ranged from 15 people (at a small public charter school) to 120 people (at a district forum).

### **Scheduling Public Presentations**

We have scheduled 30 forums to date.

### **Using Social Media**

Since this initiative began, “likes” on our “Ready-Set-Go” Common Core Facebook page have increased from 329 to 405.



## Materials Developed (July 1, 2013 – April 15, 2014)

Materials developed for internal use, Ambassador use, or for reference:

### Communications plan

- Talking points and key messaging
- FAQs
- Ambassador questions (role-play)
- Ambassador checklist
- Wiggio.com site for collaboration and scheduling (not included)
- End-of-contract report and project evaluation

Materials developed for external use, outreach use, or for distribution:

### Elementary Flyers (PDF):

- English: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Elementary-Flyer](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Elementary-Flyer)
- Spanish: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Elementary-Flyer-ES](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Elementary-Flyer-ES)
- Portuguese: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Elementary-Flyer-PT](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Elementary-Flyer-PT)

### Secondary Flyers (PDF):

- English: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Secondary-Flyer](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Secondary-Flyer)
- Spanish: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Secondary-Flyer-ES](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Secondary-Flyer-ES)
- Portuguese: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Secondary-Flyer-PT](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Secondary-Flyer-PT)

### Bookmarks (PDF):

- Parents – English: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Bookmark-Parents](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Bookmark-Parents)
- Parents – Spanish: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Bookmark-Parents-ES](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Bookmark-Parents-ES)
- Business and community: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Bookmark-Community](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Bookmark-Community)

### PowerPoints:

- General session
- Parents and community (PDF: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Outreach-PPT-Community-Sessions](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Outreach-PPT-Community-Sessions))
- Parents and community – Spanish
- Parents and community – Portuguese
- Educators

### Common Core videos: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Videos](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Videos)

- Raising the Bar (Transition in Rhode Island): [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Raising-the-Bar](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Raising-the-Bar)
- Building Foundations (K-5): [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Building-Foundations](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Building-Foundations)

- Supporting Choice and Transition (6-12): [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Supporting-Choice-and-Transition](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Supporting-Choice-and-Transition)
- Expanding Opportunities (College and Career): [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Expanding-Opportunities](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Video-Expanding-Opportunities)
- Strengthening Systems of Support for All Students (held back for further editing)

Other:

- Announcement flyer (DOCX): [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Event-Announcement](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Event-Announcement)
- Outreach sessions guidance: [www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Outreach](http://www.ride.ri.gov/CCSS-Outreach)

## Outreach Events (Public Forums) Scheduled (July 1, 2013 – April 15, 2014)

Type	LEA	Session?	Date
Charter	Beacon Charter	Occurred	3/25/2014
Charter	Blackstone Academy	No response	
Charter	BVP	Occurred	1/7/2014
Charter	Compass School	Possible in fall 2014	
Charter	Highlander	No response	
Charter	Int'l Charter School	Needs rescheduling	
Charter	Kingston Hill	Possible in fall 2014	
Charter	Nowell	Occurred	1/16/2014
Charter	Paul Cuffee	Occurred	2/25/2014
Charter	RINI	Occurred	2/11/2014
Charter	Segue IFL	No response	
Charter	TAPA	Occurred	12/28/2013
Charter	The Greene School	No response	
Charter	The Learning Community	Declined	
Charter	Virtual Green Charter	Declined	
District	Barrington	Occurred	1/28/2014
District	Bristol-Warren	Occurred	10/24/2013
District	Burrillville	Occurred	4/7/2014
District	Central Falls	No response	
District	Chariho	Declined	
District	Coventry	Occurred	3/6/2014
District	Cranston	Scheduled	4/16/2014
District	Cumberland	Occurred	1/23/2014
District	East Greenwich	No response	
District	East Providence	Occurred	11/19/2013
District	Exeter-West Greenwich	Scheduled	4/15/2014
District	Foster	No response	
District	Foster-Glocester	No response	
District	Glocester	No response	
District	Jamestown	Occurred	1/28/2014
District	Johnston	Occurred	3/4/2014
District	Lincoln	No response	
District	Little Compton	Occurred	3/5/2014
District	Middletown	In process	
District	Narragansett	Occurred	3/26/2014
District	New Shoreham	In process	
District	Newport	Holding own sessions?	
District	North Kingstown	Occurred	3/4/2014
District	North Providence	Occurred	1/27/2014
District	North Smithfield	No response	
District	Pawtucket	Holding own sessions	

District	Portsmouth	No response	
District	Providence	Occurred	4/8/2014
District	Scituate	No response	
District	Smithfield	Occurred	2/26/2014
District	South Kingstown	Occurred	1/8/2014
District	Tiverton	School committee mtg	2/25/2014
District	Warwick	Occurred	2/4/2014
District	West Warwick	No response	
District	Westerly	Occurred	2/24/2014
District	Woonsocket	No response	
Higher Ed	Rhode Island College	Scheduled	4/29/2014
Other	E. Prov. Special Ed. Parents Advisory Network	Occurred	3/26/2014
Other	RI Special Ed Adv.Bd	Scheduled	5/8/2014
Other	RIASCD	Occurred	3/19/2014
State	Davies	Occurred	3/18/2014
State	Met	No response	
State	RI School for the Deaf	Occurred	3/11/2014

## Budget Expenditures: July 1, 2013 – April 15, 2014

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Cost</b>
The Big Word	Translation services	102.73
The Big Word	Translation services	846.53
Public Consulting Group	Communications (2013)	89,619.00
Common Core Ambassadors 15 @ \$4,000 each	Outreach	60,000.00
Maria's Translations	Interpretation services	120.00
The Big Word	Translations services	1,268.84
Maria's Translations	Interpretation services	90.00
The Big Word	Translation services	18.00
Public Consulting Group	Communications (2014)	18,222.00

**Total Cost: \$170,287.10**

**Funds carried over: \$29,712.90**

### Notes:

#### Public Consulting Group (2013):

Design and delivery of materials and templates to support Common Core Ambassadors; Outreach to schedule events; Development of videos to support Common Core; Ongoing support for Ambassador communication and scheduling

#### Public Consulting Group (2014):

Outreach to schedule events;  
Ongoing support for  
Ambassador communication  
and scheduling

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Deborah A. Gist  
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

### ***Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee***

*The Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee is an active voice in advocating that all students receive superior educational services enabling each student to achieve optimum success throughout the school years and into the world of adulthood.*

**March 20, 2014**

**6:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

RI Parent Information Network  
1210 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI 02920

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Edward Angilly, Eileen Botelho, Ann Brockmann, Cris Brodeur, Jennifer Connolly, Cindy Duckworth, Gillian Elliot-Pearis, Deborah Garneau, Rosemary Gomes, Patti Hien, Barbara Irons, Laura Laviano, Pamela O'Brien, Robin Pacheco, Douglas Pierson, Brian Quigg, Maria Silvestri-Golotto, Sharon Ursini-Quimby, Marty Morris.

**Absent:** Kate Barnas\*, Wilfred Beaudoin, Sharon Bissonnette\*, Amy Canario\*, Lori DiPina\*, Susan Donovan\*, Allyson Dupont, Joanne Eichinger\*, Craig Levis, JoAnn Nannig\*, Mary Pendergast\*, Elizabeth Santana.

**RIDE-OSCAS:** Beth Pinto

*\* Indicates that prior notice was given regarding absence*

**Call to Order, Welcome, Agenda Review:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. by Patti Hien who welcomed everyone and reminded all that Susan, Mary and David were away at a conference.

#### **Announcements:**

- The membership committee has copies of Notice and Invitation that anyone can take if they know of someone they think would be interested in becoming a member of RISEAC. Applications need to be returned by April 14<sup>th</sup>.
- A reminder to all that the Parent Survey will be coming out next week, so look for it in the mail.

#### **New Business:**

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**Speakers: Kathleen Almanzor and Carolyn Taylor, Common Core Ambassadors.** The Power point presentation will be emailed out to the membership for future reference. Highlights of the presentation are given below:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are outcome based for both English/Language Arts and math.
- The CCSS were developed as a response to the increased need for remedial work that was being required at the college level.
- There is now a wealth of resources available since 36 states are using the CCSS, unlike when RI had GSEs. Websites such as Engage NY share resources that have been developed for implementing the CCSS.
- Development of the CCSS was not a federal decision; it was the result of state governors pushing for a set of common standards.
- There are fewer standards, i.e. 10 anchor standards in ELA.
- The standards are clearer and higher, the latter needed for improved readiness for college entry.
- The CCSS reflect information requested from the business sector about what they wanted in their workers.
- Standards: Learning goals, adopted by the *states*
- Curriculum: Plans for meeting the standards, developed and adopted *locally*
- Instruction: Strategies teachers use to promote student understanding, implemented in *classroom*
- Some of the changes with the new CCSS:
  - Content shifts in what teachers teach:
    - Some content shifts between grade levels
    - Some content is new
    - Some previous content no longer included
  - Conceptual shifts in how teachers teach:
    - Taught in greater depth
    - Students asked to think about content in new and different ways
- Timeline for the CCSS:
  - Adopted July 2010 for Rhode Island
  - 2010-2013 – RI began revising curriculum and instruction
  - 2013-2014 – All RI schools using new CCSS
  - 2014-2015 – RI schools administer the PARCC assessment to measure student progress
- RIDE website has many resources available

**Speaker: Phyllis Lynch, Ph.D, Director of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, RIDE** speaking about **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC)** – The Power point presentation will

be made available to the membership via email. Highlights of the presentation are listed below:

- The PARCC is made up of 16 states.
- Administration of the PARCC assessment will begin in school year 2014-2015.
- It is a system of, not just summative, assessment which includes:
  - (Optional) Diagnostic assessment
  - (Optional) Mid-year assessment – performance-based items and tasks with an emphasis on hard-to-measure standards
  - Performance-based assessment – administered about ¾ into the year with extended tasks and applications of concepts and skills
  - End-of-year assessment – administered about 90% into the year with innovative, short-answer items
- Higher expectations in ELA/literacy and math

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- Assistive technology allowed
- How PARCC will be different:
  - Will help determine if students are on track for college and career
  - Teachers will have timely data to guide learning and instruction
  - Parents will have clear and timely information about their children’s progress
  - Valid results will be comparable across borders (state to state)
  - For students, the test will reflect high-quality coursework and will be computer based, interactive and engaging
  - It will measure skills and knowledge students need for career and college
  - It will produce timely information which will allow teachers to tailor instruction to student needs
  - Includes embedded supports for English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities
- Accessibility policies include:
  - Features available for all students
  - Features identified in advance available to specific students
  - Accommodations for students with disabilities and ELL (all are IEP team decisions) – these accommodations need to be used as part of regular instruction in order for students to be eligible for the accommodations on the PARCC.
- Resources are available on RIDE website to check out various accessibility features

**Speaker: Heather Heineke, RIDE** to speak about **National Center and State Consortium (NCSC)**, the new Alternate Assessment – Highlights of the presentation are listed below:

- The NCSC will be taken by approximately 1% of students in the state
- The Common Core Connectors (CCC) have been developed which are the CCSS chunked into smaller units
- A comparison of the current RI Alternate Assessment (RIAA) and the NCSC are given:

<u>RIAA</u>	Versus	<u>NCSC</u>
Portfolio		Adaptive
Grades 2-8 and 10-11		Grades 3-8 and 11
Reading, writing, math, science		ELA and math
Year-long		month-long
Grade spans		discrete grade levels
Demanding teacher time		Lighter teacher time
Teacher scores		Teacher scores with some’ constructed
items		
Highly individualized content/activities		Standardized content with adaptations &
accommodations		

- NCSC will be operational Spring 2015

**Summary and Q&A:**

- For PARCC field testing beginning week of March 24, no results will be released to teachers or the public
- All test results will be used to improve the test before it “goes live”
- States will see data for groups of students, not for individuals
- Teachers and administrators will provide feedback on their experiences and experiences of the students

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- NCSC is aligned to CCSS but not at full grade level so it is not equivalent and not eligible for diploma
- CCC is used to design items. It breaks down CCSS and then creates items to provide a place to start
- PARCC versus Smarter Balance (other CCSS assessment) – PARCC was chosen due to the quality and approach to items; PARCC is a richer, more complex test
- Locator items help place students on the NCSC

## **Director’s Report: Briefly noted by Beth Pinto on behalf of David Sienko**

### **1. Families informed about PARCC Field Test**

As we prepare for the beginning of the PARCC Field Test on **March 24**, the Commissioner prepared this letter to all friends of education, which we will distribute over the next few days through our list-serve and on social media:

*As we continue working together to transform education in Rhode Island, one of our top priorities has been adopting standards that clearly state what our students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Over the past three years, we have worked with teachers and school leaders across the state to prepare for the new Common Core State Standards, and I am pleased that this year these standards are guiding instruction in all of our public schools.*

*Another priority for us has been developing assessments to help us see whether students have mastered the Common Core State Standards. In partnership with educators in 16 other states, we have been working for three years to develop a new set of assessments called PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). Next year, our schools will transition to these new PARCC assessments. Students in grades 3 through 10 will take the PARCC assessments in the spring of 2015. (Juniors will take the NECAP in the spring of 2015.)*

*To help everyone get ready for PARCC, about 9,000 students in most of our schools will participate in a PARCC “field test,” beginning on Monday, March 24. For most participating students, this practice test will take a total of about 3 to 5 hours, over two or three sessions. The experience of participating in the practice run will give students and teachers the opportunity to become more familiar with PARCC, preparing them for the actual assessments next year. Keep in mind that there will be no report of results from this year’s practice run, so there is no need for any anxiety about performance during the field test. And by the way – we expect glitches to occur during the practice run. We want to iron out the bugs now so that everything will go more smoothly when we roll out the PARCC next year.*

*I truly believe the PARCC assessments will improve teaching and learning in our state in several ways. Like our current assessments, the PARCC will ask students to provide written responses to many questions, giving students the opportunity to show what they know and can do. Unlike our current assessments, however, the PARCC will be offered in the spring – in line with the materials students are taking in their current classes. For most students, PARCC will be computer-based and therefore more engaging for students and easier for teachers to administer. Teachers will receive results much more quickly than they had received NECAP results, so they can use information from PARCC to guide instruction and to support individual students. Of course the questions on PARCC line up with the standards in the Common Core, so the PARCC material will be familiar to our teachers and to the students taking the assessments. We have posted a number of helpful materials on the PARCC assessments on our [website](#), and the PARCC consortium [website](#) has important materials on the field test as well.*

*Our students have made significant progress over the past five years, and I believe the Common Core and the new PARCC assessments will help us continue on the right course in the coming years. The PARCC field test will be an important step on this exciting journey!*

In an effort to assist you with notifying parents about the upcoming PARCC Field Test, RIDE has created a sample letter that you can modify to meet the specific needs of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking parents in your community. You can download a copy of the letter here:

Spanish-language version:

[www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC-FT-letter-template-doc-ES](http://www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC-FT-letter-template-doc-ES)

Portuguese-language version:

[www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC-FT-letter-template-doc-PR](http://www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC-FT-letter-template-doc-PR)

English-language version:

[www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC-FT-letter-template-doc](http://www.ride.ri.gov/PARCC-FT-letter-template-doc)

If you have any questions about the PARCC Field Test, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (222-8494 or [PARCC@ride.ri.gov](mailto:PARCC@ride.ri.gov)).

## **2. Next year's junior class to take NECAP, not PARCC assessments**

There has been some confusion in schools regarding the testing regime for the Class of 2016. Next year's junior class will take the NECAP assessments in the fall (October 2014); next year's junior class will *not* be required to take the PARCC assessments and the students will not be "double-tested." Next year's freshman and sophomore classes will take PARCC assessments, beginning in the Spring of 2015. These students (Class of 2017 and Class of 2018) will be the first to take the PARCC assessments as part of both our annual state assessments and our diploma system.

This will describe these accountability-system revisions in the application RIDE will submit to the U.S. Department of Education for an extension of our Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver discussed at last month's RISEAC meeting.

## **3. NECAP retest process completed**

The NECAP retake process for high-school seniors who had not yet fulfilled the state-assessment component of the Diploma System has been completed. Every report RIDE received has emphasized that the students and staff members took this retest opportunity seriously, that students were trying hard to show their best work throughout the testing, and that many students felt proud and optimistic on the completion of the assessments. We will have results by the end of April, and believe that many students will show improvement and that the Class of 2014 will be more ready for success beyond high school than any other graduating class from our state.

## **4. Federal lawsuit could affect special-education**

Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel David V. Abbott has informed the Rhode Island Association of School Committees that a plaintiff has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court, *K.S. v. R.I. Board of Education, et al.*, C.A. No. 14-77, that has the potential to affect the education of students with disabilities. This lawsuit argues that, under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, LEAs are responsible for providing a free, appropriate public education to students until they reach the age of 22 (instead of ending services at the age of 21). The plaintiff is seeking to make this case a class-action lawsuit. The plaintiff's attorneys base the case on a recent ruling in the State of Hawaii. As the Board of Education is named in the lawsuit legal research is being done to see if the Hawaii decision could be applicable in RI, and we will keep you informed of any significant developments related to this case.

## **5. RIDE issues annual report on career and technical education**

RIDE sent to the General Assembly our Annual Report on Career and Technical Education for the 2012-2013 School Year, which provides a summary of career-technical initiatives over the course of that year. 120 RIDE-recognized career-and-technical education programs serve about 7,600 students across the state, providing students with the knowledge, skills, and credentials they will need for entry into the Rhode Island economy. With

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the Fiscal Year 2013 categorical funding, RIDE provided \$2.7 million to aid 17 school districts administering high-cost career-technical programs. In addition, RIDE distributed \$300,000 in start-up funding (and leveraged more than \$100,000 in a cash match) through a competitive-grant process. These start-up grants provided funding to support new programs in state priority sectors.

The [report](#) is posted on the RIDE website.

## **6. RIDE issues annual report on virtual learning**

Rhode Island school leaders and teachers are embracing technology and digital learning.

To further our partnership in this initiative, RIDE has just released the annual legislative report, “RI Virtual Learning.” This report shows us how virtual learning and online instruction are transforming the way all of us think about schools, classrooms, teaching, and learning. In our Innovation Powered by Technology model schools – Pleasant View Elementary School, in Providence, and Wakefield Hills Elementary School, in West Warwick – students and teachers are creating learning environments that others are emulating. In many classrooms across the state, we see teachers and students who are working in small teams and one on one, using technology to create and collaborate and to meet the individual learning needs of every student.

This report documents, 12 of our school districts are offering students a total of 235 online courses, 4 districts are offering hybrid or blended-learning opportunities, and 2 new blended-learning schools opened this fall. A year ago, fewer than 1 of every 4 classrooms had wireless access to the Internet; today, thanks to the Wireless Classroom Initiative, we anticipate that all of our classrooms will have wireless access within the next two years. At least five school districts are moving toward providing every student access to computer devices.

The movement toward virtual learning is just beginning, but even at this early stage we can see the myriad opportunities technology and wireless communications offers for our students, teachers, and families. The [report](#) is posted on the RIDE website.

## **7. School-health programs regulations posted for public hearings**

The Department of Health has posted for public hearing the proposed Rhode Island Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs on the Secretary of State website. See the posting at this link:

[http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DOH/SchoolHealthPrograms\\_2ndPublicHearingDraft\\_11Feb2014.pdf](http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DOH/SchoolHealthPrograms_2ndPublicHearingDraft_11Feb2014.pdf)

## **8. RIDE posts responses to frequently asked questions about the Support Professionals Evaluation and Support System**

Responses to frequently asked questions about the Rhode Island Model Support Professional Evaluation and Support System have been added to the RI Model FAQs page on the RIDE website. Please feel free to contact the Educator Quality Office directly, at [ed.eval@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ed.eval@ride.ri.gov), with any additional questions or concerns.

To access the Support Professional FAQs, please go to the RIDE website at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/RIModelFAQs.aspx>.

## **9. Rhode Island receives approval for Race to the Top no-cost extension**

Over the course of the four years of our Race to the Top federal grant, we have used the \$75 million to support transforming education in Rhode Island. Among the major initiatives the grant has supported are:

- professional development for educators on transition to the Common Core State Standards,
- development by educators of curriculum in English language arts and mathematics aligned with the standards,

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- professional development for educators on the use of data,
- implementation of annual evaluations for all educators,
- induction program and supports for new teachers,
- academy for training aspiring principals,
- development and implementation of virtual learning math modules for students.

At this time, Rhode Island has met almost all goals in our Race to the Top application, and the state and all 52 participating school districts have expended almost all of the \$75 million grant funding. This entire project has been a success thanks to the ongoing and extensive partnerships formed among RIDE and the teams from your LEA and all other participating LEAs.

The U.S. Department of Education has approved RIDE's request for a no-cost extension to our Race to the Top Scope of Work, which will provide additional time to complete a few specific projects that RIDE initiated using funds from the grant. As its name implies, the no-cost extension will entail no additional cost to Rhode Island; rather, it gives us an additional year to expend remaining funds and to achieve our Race to the Top goals.

The U.S. Department of Education has approved the request to use \$2.4 million in remaining funds. Of this total, \$1,952,000 will enable RIDE to complete work on a system, now known as the Instructional Support System that will provide all educators with support and resources, including:

- information to better serve our students;
- a bank of Common Core-aligned items for classroom use;
- model lesson plans and units of study;
- assessments for measuring student progress (Interim Assessments); and
- other resources and information that support teaching and learning.

The first phase of this system is ready for use, and it is anticipated that the rollout of the Instructional Support System will be completed by the end of the year.

Our no-cost extension provides funding for two additional components of the Race to the Top Scope of Work:

- \$200,000 for develop a "platform" to provide educators with better access to professional development; and
- approximately \$280,000 to provide additional professional development to educators preparing to work in the lowest-achieving schools.

#### **10. National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day to be held April 10**

**The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, in 2010, young people aged 13 to 24 accounted for 26 percent of all new HIV infections in the United States, and nearly half of the 19 million new sexually transmitted diseases reported each year are among young people ages 15 to 24. In an effort to bring attention to this issue, April 10 has been designated as National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day. The 2014 theme is: Engaging Youth Voices in the AIDS/HIV Response. Today's young people are the first generation that has never known a world without HIV and AIDS. An AIDS-free generation is not possible without our nation's youth. Please feel free to share the HIV/AIDS Awareness resources that are available on the Advocates for Youth website, at <http://amplifyyourvoice.org/nyhaad> with your school staff. The Department of Health has additional resources for HIV prevention, at:**

<http://www.health.ri.gov/healthyliving/sexualhealth/about/safersex/index.php>

#### **11. U.S. Department of Labor awarding grants for education of disadvantaged youth**

The U.S. Department of Labor will award Youth Build grants to organizations to oversee the provision of education, occupational skills training, and employment services to disadvantaged youth in their communities while performing meaningful work and service. The program addresses affordable housing, education,

employment, crime prevention, and leadership development. The application deadline is April 22. For more information, click [here](#).

## **12. ResilientKids to hold workshop on mindfulness**

A Rhode Island nonprofit, ResilientKids, is working with 1,300 students in nine Rhode Island public schools, most of them in high-need districts, teaching mindfulness and yoga as part of the school day. Students and teachers report excellent results - increased focus, reduced stress, fewer behavioral referrals.

ResilientKids is offering a workshop for teachers, principals, social workers, parents, guidance counselors, psychologists, and school nurses, featuring two national leaders in mindfulness in education. The workshop has two goals: explore the concept of mindfulness and how it can be applied to support adults working in your school, and engage in hands-on learning about mindfulness concepts and techniques.

The [workshop](#) will take place on Friday, **April 11**, from 8 a.m. to noon, at the Squantum Association, 947 Veterans Memorial Parkway, East Providence.

To learn more about ResilientKids, see: <http://www.resilientkids.org>

## **13. RIDE Team Attending Regional Meeting on SSIP**

The RI Team is attending the North East regional meeting on preparing for the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) also known as Indicator 17. The team has now met with OSEP, national experts and has had state planning team time to examine the timeline and content for the development of the SSIP. We will provide an update at next month's RISEAC meeting.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion was initiated by Maria and seconded by Ann to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Recording Secretary: Ann L. Brockmann

RISEAC website: [www.riseac.org](http://www.riseac.org)

# **RISEAC OSCAS Director's Report**

**February 27, 2014**

## **RI Diploma System Update (see Power Point presentation)**

### **RIDE to Submit State Part B Grant Application**

OSCAS will be submitting the IDEA Part B Grant application May 12, 2014. The ad announcing the public review and comment period will be in the Providence Journal this weekend. The draft application will be posted for review and comment to the RIDE web site by Monday March 3, 2014. RISEAC and the public are welcome to comment on the application.

### **RIDE to Submit Revised ESEA Waiver Application**

**RIDE will be submitting the revised ESEA Waiver Application shortly. I will forward the announcement to RISEAC for comment when the application is posted.**

### **RIDE to send Team to Regional Meeting on SSIP (Indicator 17)**

Beginning with the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted in February 2015, states will be required to submit Phase I of a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that will describe how the state will focus on improved results for children with disabilities and their families. The NERRC will be hosting a regional meeting for state teams March 19-20 in Springfield, MA.

Rhode Island will be sending a team as recommended by NERRC to include, State Director of Special Education, State Advisory Panel member and a Parent Center representative as well as two staff from OSCAS responsible for Performance Management in the SPP/APR and the MTSS initiative.

The NERRC Regional SSIP Meeting will take states from "where they are" and provide them with protected state team planning time, as well as opportunities for cross-state sharing and consultation with national experts. Our objective is that by June 2014, state teams will be ready to write their SSIP for the FFY 13 submission

### **The 2nd Rhode Island Statewide Transition Institute**

The Rhode Island Department of Education in collaboration with Regional Transition Centers will be hosting the second Statewide Transition Institute Roger Williams University, Feinstein College of Arts and Sciences, Bristol RI, March 13 & 14, 2014. This will be a working institute with district teams attending transition rich content sessions, team planning times and

technical assistance from National Centers. Please feel free to contact Jane Slade [jane.slade@ride.ri.gov](mailto:jane.slade@ride.ri.gov) with questions.

### **RIPIN Announces Partnerships Conference**

RIPIN is proud to announce the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Partnerships Conference, Wednesday, March 12, 2014 at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick. Please click on the link below for a brochure to share with families and registration information. Attendance is \$15 and includes lunch. The Partnerships Conference is for families and professionals interested in understanding how to navigate the special needs and disability systems.

<http://www.ripin.org/PartnershipsConference2014.html>

### **Dare to Dream Conference – May 21, 2014**

The 6th Annual Dare to Dream (D2D) Conference will be held on Wednesday May 21st, 8:00 am-3:00 pm. D2D is Rhode Island's self-determination conference for middle and high school students with diverse learning and special health care needs. For more information please contact [deb.golding@Health.ri.gov](mailto:deb.golding@Health.ri.gov) or call 401-222-5954.

### **Governor Chafee's budget supports education**

The Governor has proposed an additional \$38 million to continue to accelerate Rhode Island's K-through-12 funding formula with full funding for Year 4 of the Funding Formula. In addition the Governor proposes to rectify funding inequities of the past and to provide additional support to those communities in greatest need. In addition, the Funding Formula Fiscal Year 2015 would include an additional \$1.1 million (\$4.4 million total) for transportation, an additional \$500,000 (\$1.5 million total) for high-cost special education, an additional \$500,000 (\$3.5 million total) for career-and-technical education, and an additional \$1 million (\$3 million total) for early-childhood education. Governor Chafee has also proposed \$5.9 million over five years to repair career-technical centers across the state.

### **LEAs encouraged to participate in Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge initiatives**

Rhode Island was awarded \$50 million over four years to improve the quality of early learning and to develop programs for the youngest children in our state. Educators in our public schools can support outcomes for young children by understanding the quality of their early-childhood classrooms and by developing and implementing best practices. The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge provides our schools with multiple opportunities to build quality in their preschool programs. Schools that would like more information or someone to come and speak at your LEA regarding the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, please contact Melissa Emidy, at [Melissa.emidy@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Melissa.emidy@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8165.

## **Model school-safety plan developed for LEA use**

Last year, the General Assembly passed legislation on school safety, which requires annual reviews and updates of school-safety plans and also requires us to develop a model school-safety plan for your use or adaptation. In partnership with Emergency Management Agency; the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals; the Department of Public Safety; the State Police; and the Division of the State Fire Marshal, a model plan has been developed. The model plan is posted on the [emergency-preparedness page](#) on the RIDE website.

## **RIDE releases October 2013 NECAP results**

The complete report included cross-state comparisons, reports on disaggregations and achievement gaps, data on progress over time, the results of the writing assessment, and results at the school level.

Among the highlights:

- Rhode Island high-school students fared well compared with their peers in the region and improved their performance overall.
- Rhode Island students in grade 11 improved by 2 percentage points, to 81 percent proficiency, in reading, and by 2 percentage points in mathematics as well, to 36 percent proficiency.
- Rhode Island high-school scores are once again the highest among the NECAP in reading and have caught up with the other NECAP states in mathematics.
- Rhode Island results also remain strong in writing, with 60 percent of the tested students in elementary and middle school attaining proficiency – highest among the NECAP states.
- Rhode Island high-school students scored 66-percent proficient in writing, also highest among the NECAP states.
- At the local level, a number of schools and LEAs have made significant improvements in both mathematics and reading over the past five years:
- LEAs making significant progress in both mathematics and reading over the past five years are: Chariho Regional, Cumberland, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional, North Kingstown, North Providence, Providence, and The Learning Community (charter).
- The Lincoln School District made significant one-year gains in reading, improving by 4 percentage points.
- Schools making significant progress in both mathematics and reading over the past five years are: Burrillville High School, Chariho Middle School, Coventry High School, East Providence High School, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional Senior High School, Frank E. Thompson Middle School (Newport), North Kingstown Senior High School, North

Providence High School, Vartan Gregorian Elementary School (Providence), Times 2 Academy Middle School (Providence charter), The Learning Community Elementary School, Pilgrim High School (Warwick), Warwick Veterans Memorial High School, and Westerly High School.

- Forest Avenue Elementary School, in Middletown, made significant one-year gains in both mathematics and reading. Burrillville High School, Narragansett High School, and Westerly High School made significant one-year gains in mathematics. Lyman B. Goff Junior High School and William E. Tolman Senior High School, both in Pawtucket, made significant one-year gains in reading.

The report is posted on the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/NECAPAssessment/NECAPResults.aspx>

### **RIDE seeks public comment on proposed new tests, passing scores for initial educator certification**

ETS, the testing company whose tests we use in Rhode Island as part of the educator-certification process, is adding new tests and phasing out older tests. There are currently six tests that ETS has regenerated that affect our current certification process. RIDE is seeking public comment from the education community and the general public on the certification tests and passing scores for initial educator certification in Rhode Island that RIDE has proposed and that the Board of Education has approved for public comment. To provide comments on the proposed certification tests and passing scores, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Certification-Updates>. If you have any questions about these tests and passing scores, please feel free to contact Hilda Potrzeba, at [hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov](mailto:hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8891.

### **U.S. Department of Education notes Career and Technical Education Month**

This month, during [Career and Technical Education Month](#), the U.S. Department of Education announced that the name of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education has been changed to the [Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education](#) (OCTAE), acknowledging that “career and technical education” is a more accurate term to describe what and how students are studying to be career-ready. The office has a rich history of being in the forefront of career, technical, and adult education, providing critical funding and technical resources, for example, to the career-pathways movement. OCTAE continues to be the office responsible for administering federal career-technical education (CTE) programs, as well as the partner adult-education programs. Two years ago, the office issued a [blueprint](#) calling for effective, high-quality CTE programs aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Students in such CTE programs graduate with industry certifications, licenses and postsecondary certificates, or degrees that prepare them for in-demand careers within high-growth sectors.

### **RIDE develops, posts videos on Common Core State Standards**

RIDE has received a foundation grant to help advance communications regarding the Common Core. This grant has financed the team of Common Core Ambassadors, who have led a series of informational forums on the Common Core in many communities. The grant has also enabled RIDE to develop several informational [videos](#) on the Common Core, which are posted on the RIDE website.

### **Providence schools, The Learning Community, Inspiring Minds receive grants**

The Providence Public Schools and Ready to Learn Providence on the receipt of a \$3-million Investing in Innovation competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant will support efforts to engage with families to teach “the life skills every child needs to succeed.” Congratulations as well to The Learning Community charter public school, which has received a \$75,000 grant from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island to “engage students and their families in a lifelong commitment to exercise and healthy living.”

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Elliot Krieger, Communications – (401) 222-8471  
Embargo until: Immediate release – April 28, 2014

### **RIDE schedules webinars on proposed changes to classification system**

The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) is completing the process of developing an application for renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, under which, in 2012, the U.S. Department of Education allowed RIDE to implement the current system of school [classifications](#) and accountability. Under this system, RIDE classifies schools based on:

- **Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?
- **Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?
- **Participation:** How many students take the state assessments?
- **Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners?
- **Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?
- **Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?
- **Improvement** (high schools): Is the school improving annually?
- **Graduation** (high schools): Is the school reaching its graduation-rate goals?

Using these measures, RIDE places each school into one of six classifications: Commended, Leading, Typical, Warning, Focus, or Priority.

Overall, RIDE intends to leave the classifications and accountability system largely unchanged, but RIDE does have to make some technical changes because of the transition next year from NECAP to PARCC assessments. RIDE continues to seek input on the renewal application, and to that end RIDE has scheduled two webinars for people in the education field and for the general public as well:

- **Tuesday** (April 29), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)
- **Wednesday** (April 30), from 4:30-5:30 p.m.: [RSVP online](#)

(The content will be the same for both, so those interested in participating need to RSVP for only one.) All are invited to join either webinar.

###

**Telephone** 401-222-4600 **Fax** 401-222-6178 **TTY** 800-745-5555 **Voice** 800-745-6575

The R.I. Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex,  
sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, religion, national origin, or disability.



## **Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

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Request for Renewal of Rhode Island ESEA Flexibility



## Background

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In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education offered states flexibility from some requirements of ESEA (aka NCLB).

In May 2012, the U.S. Department of Education approved the Rhode Island request for flexibility, resulting in a new system of recognition, accountability and support for our public schools and educators.



## Our Former Accountability System

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School performance was measured on a “one size fits all” approach based solely on percent of students proficient by grade level; whole school; and by student groups.

The only other measures considered were attendance rate; and graduation rate.

Despite the fact that schools faced different numbers of targets based on their student diversity, missing any target triggered the same consequences.



## ESEA Waiver Requires Adherence to Four Principles

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1. Adoption of College and Career Ready Standards and Assessment for All Students
2. State-Developed, Differentiated Systems of Recognition, Accountability and Support
3. Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership through Educator Evaluation
4. Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden



# School Classifications

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We base school classifications on a Composite Index Score that includes the following elements:

**Proficiency:** How many students have attained proficiency or better?

**Distinction:** How many students have attained distinction?

**Gap-closing:** Is the school serving all students?

**Progress:** Is the school approaching its 2017 targets?

**Growth (K-8):** Are all students making progress?

**Improvement (high schools):** Is the school improving annually?

**Graduation (high schools):** Are all students ready for success?



# Our New Accountability System

<b>ESEA Flexibility Design Weights</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Elementary / Middle Schools</b>	<b>High Schools</b>
Absolute Percent Proficient	All Students	30	30
Progress to 2017 Target	All Students	10	10
Subgroup Performance Gaps against Performance Reference Group	Minority+FRL	30	30
	IEP+LEP		
Percent of Tested Students in Distinction Level	All Students	5	5
Growth	All Students	25	0
	Minority+FRL		
	IEP+LEP		
HS Graduation Rates	All Students		20
HS Scaled Score Change	All Students		5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



## Recognition

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The highest-performing schools are recognized as:

Leading Schools; or

Commended Schools.



# Accountability

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Classification system: Each school is classified based on composite index score.

Diagnostic screens: RIDE has developed web-based tools for analysis of results.

RIDE helps identify shortcomings and achievements at each school.



## Support

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For schools identified as “Priority” and “Focus;”  
Districts select interventions that respond to:

their context; and  
their needs.

RIDE ensures that interventions are supported  
by available data; approves a school reform  
plan; and monitors interventions over time.



# Flexibility Request Renewal

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## Few Changes from Initial Request

For the most part, our system of Recognition, Accountability, and Support will remain the same as the approved request of 2012.

However:

We need to make some changes in our system because of transition from NECAP to PARCC assessments.



## School Classifications: Current School Year

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RIDE will announce school classifications around June 1, 2014.

RIDE will continue to calculate and publish Composite Index Scores for all schools.

RIDE will identify new Warning, Typical, Leading, and Commended schools, using the same rules and criteria in place since 2012.

However:

RIDE will identify no new Priority or Focus schools.



## School Classifications: 2014 – 2015 School Year

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Pending approval from the U.S. Department of Education:

- RIDE will announce new Composite Index Scores for all schools in December 2015.
- “Progress to target” scores will not be available for elementary and middle schools so those 10 points will be distributed across the remaining metrics for the 2014 - 2015 school year only.
- RIDE will calculate and publish composite index scores based on results of PARCC assessments (for elementary and middle schools) and grade11 NECAP assessments (for high schools).
- RIDE will label *no new* schools as Priority, Focus, Warning, Typical, or Leading, but Priority and Focus schools will retain their classification.
- RIDE will identify *only* Commended schools, using the rules and criteria in place since 2012.



## Accountability – Going Forward

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During the 2014-15 school year, RIDE will analyze assessment data and will engage with field to make decisions about accountability going forward, particularly:

- using data from PARCC assessments to set new annual measurable objectives for all schools; and
- setting new cut scores for all schools to measure progress toward targets and closing achievement gaps.



## **Educator Evaluation: 2014 – 2015 School Year**

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Pending approval from the U.S. Department of Education:

- The Rhode Island Growth Model will be used to measure student learning for teachers beginning in the 2016 – 2017 school year.
- Growth model data will continue to be made available to teachers and administrators for the purposes of improving student learning.
- Student Learning Objective data will continue to be included in teachers' summative ratings in 2014 – 2015.



# Contacts and More Information

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Please send questions and comments to:

[ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov)

For more information on the Rhode Island system for school classifications and accountability or to see a copy of this presentation, visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/Accountability/SchoolClassifications.aspx>

Attachment 14: Consultation-Question #1 –  
Answer Submitted in 2012 Application

## Attachment 14

Rhode Island Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist has a strong, ongoing commitment to engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives. In keeping with that commitment, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) conducted extensive outreach throughout the development and refinement of this ESEA flexibility request. During the “Input Phase” of our outreach when our draft was under development, we solicited comments on perceived limitations of the No Child Left Behind Act, as well as suggestions for our request for flexibility, at a series of targeted events and through a designated e-mail address. We then posted our draft flexibility request to the RIDE website and began the “Feedback Phase,” in which we solicited specific comments and feedback from targeted stakeholders and the public, again via meetings, webinars, and the designated email address. [For a complete list of the outreach events that RIDE conducted during this process, refer to “Table 1: Stakeholder Outreach around Rhode Island’s ESEA Flexibility Request” at the end of this section.]

In total, RIDE hosted three community forums, made presentations at fifteen stakeholder-specific meetings, and hosted four webinars to share information about our flexibility request and to solicit input and feedback. In addition, RIDE consulted with our Committee of Practitioners to gather its feedback on our request. Weekly e-mails to the Commissioner’s contact lists, as well as posts to the Commissioner’s social-media pages, directed stakeholders – teachers, administrators, parents, students, government officials, community and advocacy organizations, business leaders, and others – to the RIDE website to learn more about our developing proposal and to provide input and feedback. [See Attachment 3 for evidence from RIDE’s outreach efforts.] Those weekly e-mails and web posts also informed Rhode Islanders of the many opportunities to learn more at public forums and stakeholder-specific meetings and webinars. The RIDE staff leading this outreach effort directly contacted targeted stakeholder groups to invite them to review the draft request and to schedule a time to meet and discuss their feedback.

RIDE is committed to ensuring that classroom teachers are informed, involved, and meaningfully engaged in the policy and implementation decisions that affect their work. Teachers and union leaders have been deeply engaged in the development and implementation of the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System and in our transition to the Common Core State Standards, as discussed in Principles 1 and 3 herein. To ensure that teachers were similarly engaged in the development of this flexibility request, RIDE actively solicited teacher comments during both the Input Phase and Feedback Phase of our outreach. RIDE worked with our two state teachers’ unions to ensure that information regarding ESEA flexibility and the opportunity to provide feedback reached teachers, and RIDE and the two unions co-hosted a webinar for local union leaders and other teachers. In addition, local union leaders and individual teachers, including special education teachers and teachers of English Learners (ELs), attended the three public forums and “all-educators webinar” that we held. RIDE also presented information about ESEA flexibility to the Commissioner’s Distinguished Educators Cabinet to solicit input from our state’s award-winning educators.

Teachers who participated in events and submitted written comments emphasized that they appreciated the inclusion of growth measures into our proposed accountability system. As one award-winning educator said during our meeting with the Distinguished Educators Cabinet, “The ideal accountability system would be a hybrid of using a growth model and proficiency measures, so that we can recognize growth but also be

honest about how a child, school, and district are performing in terms of proficiency for the age and grade level.” We heard similar feedback from various types of educators and administrators, which affirmed our position that the inclusion of growth measures is essential and was long-awaited by many in the education field. Another affirming piece of feedback from several teachers was regarding the importance of including additional years in our calculation of high school graduation rates. Multiple teachers of special education students discussed the accountability benefits this would offer to schools and LEAs that successfully graduate special education students who stay in school longer than four or even five years. Our decision to include six years in our calculation of graduation rates supports this position, which was also shared by many other stakeholders.

RIDE conducted significant targeted outreach to school and LEA-level administrators, classroom teachers, and union representatives. Both superintendents and principals emphasized that we should eliminate the requirement that schools identified as persistently low-achieving had to remove the school principal, regardless of that individual’s track record at the school. Our “Flex Plan” option is responsive to this feedback and does not call for the automatic removal of principal or staff, but rather requires the school to take significant action – one option being the removal of the principal – based on the specific needs and gaps identified through a newly developed diagnostic screen. In general, administrators praised the Flex Plan option for its use of the Basic Education Program capacities and the balance of rigor and manageability among its options. Superintendents were adamant that the diagnostic screen should be made available to all schools so that they may identify their greatest needs and strategies to address them. RIDE has since made the decision to extend the use of the diagnostic screen to any school that wishes to use it, not only to identified focus and priority schools.

Finally, superintendents suggested that we include assessment participation rates into the accountability structure so as to capture the extent to which a school has been successful at emphasizing the importance of the assessment to students and educators. We have responded to this excellent suggestion by making 95% participation in the state assessment a threshold determinant for school classification. Regardless of how a school performs in our composite measurement system, a school that fails to meet the participation target will be designated as a “Warning” school subject to state intervention.

Attachment 15: Consultation-Question #2 –  
Answer Submitted in 2012 Application

## Attachment 15

As discussed above in response to question one, RIDE provided information to, and solicited comments from, a variety of stakeholders regarding our ESEA flexibility request. [For a complete list of the outreach events that RIDE conducted during this process, refer to “Table 1: Stakeholder Outreach around Rhode Island’s ESEA Flexibility Request” on page 14.] Families, community organizations, advocacy organizations for students with special needs and students who are English Learners and business leaders were all included on each of the broad communications that RIDE issued regarding ESEA flexibility. In addition, we targeted topical outreach to these stakeholders, inviting them to provide comments online and also to attend public forums and stakeholder-specific meetings and webinars.

We offered a targeted webinar for business leaders and several targeted meetings for student advocates, families, and community leaders to offer input and feedback on our flexibility request. RIDE proactively sought the engagement and feedback of these groups during the Input and Feedback Phases to ensure that a diversity of perspectives would inform our thinking around crafting a new accountability structure for Rhode Island schools. In total, approximately 200 educators and community members participated in the presentations and feedback sessions that RIDE offered, and we received approximately 35 written comments on our request through our designated e-mail address. [See Attachment 2 for a summary of comments received.]

On the whole, parents, community organizations, and student advocacy groups praised the role that the decreased n size and the role that consolidated subgroups would play in shining a brighter light on achievement gaps in more schools across the state, as well as equalizing the number of targets that must be met by urban and suburban schools. Another overarching theme from the feedback of community partners was their appreciation of our plan for districts to administer targeted interventions to students, and within struggling schools generally, based on data. The idea of using a diagnostic screen to identify needs and gaps within a school, and then choose interventions based on those needs, was extremely well-received by community members and educators alike.

During both the input and feedback phases of our public outreach efforts, RIDE staff met with representatives from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center sites (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) and the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance. These groups strongly advocated for RIDE to reconsider our original decision to seek flexibility around the use of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding. Through these meetings, RIDE staff better understood and ultimately agreed that the current investment strategies for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC are yielding rich results across Rhode Island and have a long track record of success. Further, RIDE staff and community organizations all agree that the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding can be managed and weighted by the SEA in a manner that will ensure a focus on students and schools in greatest need and the applicants with the strongest program design. Consequently – and directly due to outreach efforts -- RIDE is not seeking the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC waiver in our final application.

We received consistent feedback from educators, families, community groups, advocacy organizations – particularly advocates of special needs and EL students –

emphasizing the need for additional student supports and interventions for at-risk students, especially those who have special needs or are English Learners. During the Feedback Phase, many teachers and administrators who read our draft request articulated the need for more of an emphasis on increased supports and interventions for special needs students and EL students. As a result of this feedback, our waiver application now includes more narrative on the many student supports established under State law, including a comprehensive Response to Intervention initiative, special supports to teachers of EL students and students on IEP's, and an enhanced monitoring and information system specific to supports for students acquiring English. We also received feedback from our state-level EL Advisory Committee suggesting that we establish disaggregated graduation rates for ELs, as well as for students with IEP's. We have incorporated this suggestion into our accountability and reporting system. Many advocates of special needs students also articulated support for our decision to include additional years into our calculation of graduation rates for accountability purposes.

Advocates for EL students requested that RIDE consider waiving first-year EL students from the requirement to take the state assessment in mathematics. It is their contention that some students may be in schools for less than a week and still have to participate in the state mathematics assessment. This is a particular concern due to Rhode Island's fall testing program. These same advocates also suggested including English proficiency measures as part of the school diagnostic screen, which we found to be a helpful addition to the screen to give a deeper picture about the needs of a school that is struggling, especially in those schools with relatively low incidence populations who have previously escaped scrutiny under our current system. Multiple community organizations recommended that chronic absenteeism data be included, and we acted on that suggestion by adding this additional piece of evidence to the screen, as we know that chronic absenteeism has a detrimental effect on student and school performance.

The most controversial element of our waiver application has been the creation of a consolidated sub-group that combines English Learner students and students with disabilities. There has been general acknowledgement and support for RIDE's commitment to expand accountability for low incidence populations, especially in regard to identifying achievement gaps. However, the EL and SPED advocacy communities expressed early and strong reservations based on: (1) a perception of insensitivity and lack of differentiation for these two very different sub-populations; (2) a mistaken belief that the proposed Rhode Island system would not recognize critical differences in performance between these two groups within one school or system; and (3) a misunderstanding of how supports and interventions would be derived, thereby raising the inference that RIDE planned on a "one size fits all" approaches to improving student performance. These concerns are well-expressed in the February 1, 2012 letter from ELL Advisory Committee member Dr. J. Andrés Ramírez (Appendix F).

Prior to receiving this letter, RIDE had invited all members of the RI ELL Advisory Committee to a meeting to discuss RIDE's proposal to create a consolidated sub-group consisting of both EL and SPED students. The meeting with the ELL Advisory Committee was held on Monday, February 13, 2012. The Deputy Commissioner explained that RIDE was well aware of the perceptions that might arise from using this combination of program-dependent students. However, it was also explained that the benefits far outweighed the risk in that too many of our schools were not being held

accountable for the performance of their English Learners. Even with a reduction in the “n” size to 20, only 54 of 300 schools would be held accountable for their EL students. By combining EL student performance with SPED student performance, that number jumped to 227! When it was explained that AMO sub-group accountability would remain in place, and that interventions would be based only on fully disaggregated results, our rationale became clear. The RI LEP/ELL Advisory Council, including Dr. Ramirez, provided its official position to RIDE on February 16, 2012.

While it is troubling that these two very different populations of students will be grouped together, the end result shows promise. If things play out the way RIDE is projecting, a substantial number of schools that were previously not help accountable for the achievement of their ELLs will come under closer scrutiny according to state and federal guidelines. We were also assured, and it appears in the documents, that while ELLs and students with IEPs will be grouped together for initial accountability, the data will be disaggregated before it is used for other purposes. (Appendix F).

It should also be noted that RIDE officials also met with the RI State Special Education Advisory Board, who did not raise objections to the proposed consolidated sub-group once there was an understanding that intervention and support decisions would be made only on the basis of disaggregated data<sup>[KE1]</sup>.

**Table 1: Stakeholder Outreach Around Rhode Island’s ESEA Flexibility Request**

<b>EVENT NAME</b>	<b>EVENT DATE</b>
<b>Input Phase (prior to draft)</b>	
Board of Regents Briefing	October 6, 2011
Distinguished Educators Cabinet Meeting	November 30, 2011
South County “How’s School?” Parent and Community Forum	December 1, 2011
RI Association of School Principals, RI Middle Level Educators, and RI ASCD Meeting	December 2, 2011
English Language Learners Directors Meeting	December 8, 2011
RI Association of School Committees Meeting	December 10, 2011
Public Forum	December 12, 2011
Race to the Top Meeting with Superintendents, Board Chairs, Union Presidents, and Charter School Representatives	December 13, 2011
RI Association of School Principals Executive Board Meeting	December 14, 2011
Community Forum for Parents, Students, Community Organizations, Special Education advocates, and English Language Learners advocates	January 9, 2012
Webinar for Local Union Leaders and Teachers Co-hosted by RIDE, RI Federation of Teachers, and National Education Association RI	January 9, 2012

Webinar for Principals Co-hosted by RIDE and RI Association of School Principals	January 10, 2012
Webinar for Business Leaders	January 13, 2012
<b>Feedback Phase (<i>after draft released</i>)</b>	
RI Association of School Superintendents Meeting	January 19, 2012
Webinar for All Educators	January 30, 2012
Meeting with Urban LEAs	January 31, 2012
Public Forum	February 1, 2012
Board of Regents Briefing	February 2, 2012
Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting	February 6, 2012
Advocacy Groups Meeting	February 7, 2012
Committee of Practitioners Meeting	February 9, 2012
Civic and Community Leaders Briefing	February 10, 2012
English Language Learners Advisory Board Meeting	February 13, 2012
RI Association of School Principals Executive Board	February 15, 2012