

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, January 24, 2014

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Thursday (January 31): Deadline for checking [demographic file](#)

February 3: Grade-12 NECAP files due (see [below](#))

February 3: Deadline for evaluation surveys (see [below](#))

March 7: School Health Profiles due (see [below](#))

Notes from Commissioner Gist

1. State of Education address scheduled for Thursday (January 30)

On Thursday (January 30), at approximately 5 p.m., I will deliver my annual State of Education address in the House Chamber, before a joint session of the General Assembly. In this year's address, I will take note of some of our accomplishments in transforming education over the past year, recognize several distinguished educators from across the state, and look ahead at some challenges, initiatives, and opportunities that may guide our work in the coming years. I also plan to discuss some highlights of the October 2013 NECAP results, which we will discuss in more detail with the media and with the Board of Education on January

31. I invite you and your team to join us at the State House on January 30 for the State of Education address, which gives us the opportunity to build among our elected officials and other state leaders with an appreciation for the work that educators and students take on every day.

Repeating from yesterday's Field Memo Alert:

**2. RIDE provides LEAs with confidential results for grade-12
NECAP retests; LEAs asked to review, update files by
February 3 – Action Item**

I am grateful for your ongoing efforts to provide all our high-school students with additional support. Over the past several years, you have focused particular instructional attention on the Class of 2014. RIDE has now received and processed the 12th-grade retake data. Overall, we are seeing positive progress across the state. The combination of the efforts of Rhode Island educators and students, coupled with the availability of an array of additional opportunities for students to demonstrate their readiness, give me confidence that our high-school seniors have substantially improved their core academic skills and will earn a diploma.

You now have access to the 12th-grade NECAP results for your LEA in mathematics, reading, or both. There are separate mathematics and reading data files, which include a data layout and instructions. The files provide each student's NECAP score and his or her status relative to making the progress required to meet the state-assessment graduation requirement. Whenever English Learners were eligible for the language-proficiency adjustment, we have made this adjustment and incorporated the adjusted score into this file.

You will find all your data and additional guidance information using “File Share,” which is accessible through eRIDE. Once you log in to eRIDE, you will see the “File Share” icon for File Share. There, you will find five files relevant to the 12th-grade results for your LEA: (1) the NECAP Mathematics Retest file, (2) the NECAP Reading Retest file, (3) the NECAP retest file Guidance Document, and (4) the NECAP Accommodations Codes. If help you need help at any time during this process, please enter a RIDEMap helpdesk ticket, at support@ride.ri.gov (please choose eRIDE as a topic). In order to ensure that we know precisely who needs to take part in the third NECAP administration, we are requesting that you *complete the additional fields in the mathematics and reading files*. These complete files will serve as the registration for the NECAP retest. Please follow the timeline and complete these files fully so that we can accurately coordinate the NECAP-administrative logistics.

We ask that you return to us the mathematics and reading files *no later than* Monday, **February 3** to ensure the timely and correct labeling and delivery of the retest booklets for NECAP mathematics and reading. You are responsible for reviewing the files to ensure that our records account for all students who took the fall 2013 NECAP retest. Once you have completed the files, upload them into the File Share and send a confirmation e-mail to Jessica Murphy (jessica.murphy@ride.ri.gov).

If you or your data manager have any questions about these files, please contact Michael Ferry (Michael.Ferry@ride.ri.gov). We will attempt to resolve all problems as quickly as possible.

This information is under a ***strict media embargo*** that affords every LEA the time to initiate critical family communications. Do not share these results publicly or discuss the results with the media until after 10 a.m., on Friday, **January 31**.

Let's continue working together so that we can provide our students with every opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency and to be eligible for graduation this spring.

3. Rhode Island schools prepare for Digital Learning Day, February 5

As I noted to you in last week's Field Memo, on Wednesday, **February 5**, schools across the country will celebrate [Digital Learning Day](#). I know that many Rhode Island schools will participate in this day of celebration, through such events as a Techno Expo at the Thompson Middle School, in Newport; a school-wide Twitter chat at Cumberland High School; a Bring Your Own Device day at the Harry Kizirian Elementary School, in Providence; and a "code academy" at Exeter-West Greenwich Regional Senior High School. I'd love to hear about more events planned for the day, so please feel free to let me know about anything you've scheduled – or get in touch with our technology specialist, Holly Walsh (holly.walsh@ride.ri.gov) if you'd like to discuss some potential ideas. I also encourage you to add our [events](#) to the [Celebration Map](#) as well as take [the pledge](#) to support digital learning!

4. Discussion of Rick Hess's *Cage-Busting Leadership* rescheduled to February 21

Rick Hess's visit to Rhode Island late last year has sparked further conversations about what it means to be a "cage-busting leader" and how we can break through some of the barriers that seem to stand in our way as we work together to transform education. As I noted in a recent Field Memo, quite a few educators have gotten back to me in response to my invitation to anyone who would like

to come together to continue the discussion on cage-busting leadership.

We had scheduled a discussion session on Rick Hess's *Cage-Busting Leadership* for Wednesday (January 29), but we have to move the event to Friday, **February 21**, at 4:30 p.m., in Room 501 here at RIDE (80 Washington St./255 Westminister St., Providence). I am sorry that we have had to reschedule this discussion, but please hold the new date of February 21.

Please e-mail my executive assistant, Dana Wilson (dana.wilson@ride.ri.gov), if you are interested in joining us on February 21 – and please feel free to share this invitation with others on your team.

5. Two students selected as Senate Youth Program delegates

We have received word that Senators Reed and Whitehouse have named two Rhode Island students as delegates to the 52nd annual United States Senate Youth Program, to be held in Washington, D.C., in March. Congratulations to our two delegates: Samuel Ackerman, of Cumberland High School, and Reilly McGreen, of South Kingstown High School. The RIDE team was involved in the selection process, and I am very confident that these two young men represent the ideals of the program: education, leadership, and public service.

6. RISSA named Todd Flaherty as winner of Paul W. Crowley Award

The Rhode Island School Superintendents Association (RISSA) has notified us that the association will present the 7th annual Paul W. Crowley Award to Todd Flaherty, Ed.D. For the past five years,

Todd has served as the president and CEO of The College Crusade of Rhode Island, and before that he served for 12 years as the Deputy Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education – so he is certainly well-known and highly respected by the team at RIDE! Todd was also the principal at Narragansett High School, which won a Blue Ribbon award from the U.S. Department of Education under his leadership. RISSA will present the award to Todd in a ceremony at the State House, on March 5.

7. Smithfield High students win state title in Verizon Innovative App Challenge

This week we learned that a team of students from Smithfield High School was recognized as a Best in State winner in the 2014 Verizon Innovative App Challenge. According to Verizon, the team's app concept, *Emergency Operations Plan*, which focuses on simple, intuitive, and time-efficient evacuation in the event of a fire or emergency event, earned top points in Rhode Island for its creativity, innovative design, and application of STEM principles to the development process. Verizon reports that this year nearly 1,300 teams submitted app concepts nationwide. More information is available online at the [Verizon Innovative App Challenge website](#) . The Smithfield High School team now is in the running for the Best in Region and Best in Nation titles, which the Verizon Foundation and the Technology Student Association will announce next month. Congratulations, Smithfield High teachers and students – and good luck in the next stage of this awards competition!

From RIDE

Health:

8. Principals to receive 2014 School Health Profiles surveys; must be completed and returned by March 7 – *Action Item*

Along with the Department of Health, through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, RIDE be administering the 2014 School Health Profiles (Profiles). Profiles surveys are conducted every two years among principals and lead health-education teachers to assess the status of school health policies and programs at the middle- and high-school levels. Survey packets will be mailed to principals within the next several weeks and will need to be completed and returned to RIDE by Friday, **March 7**. For questions regarding the administration of the surveys, please contact Midge Sabatini, at Midge.Sabatini@ride.ri.gov, or Jasmine Rezendes, at Jasmine.Rezendes@ride.ri.gov.

Assessments:

9. RIDE requests notification from LEAs planning to use Fixed Form Interim Assessments

RIDE is requesting that LEAs planning to use the Winter or Spring Fixed Form Interim Assessments contact Jessica Bailey (jessica.bailey@ride.ri.gov or 222-8253) to discuss report updates. As a reminder, the winter administration window closes Feb 28 and the spring administration window is March 5 through May 30. Scoring of constructed-response items does not necessarily have to be completed during the administration window. Please contact Jessica as soon as possible if schools in your LEA would like to use the assessments.

Evaluations:

10. All educators urged to complete surveys on evaluations; deadline, February 3 – *Reminder*

The deadline for completing the mid-year educator-evaluation surveys is Monday, **February 3**. To date, 2,646 teachers, 847 support professionals, 211 building administrators, and 88 central-office administrators have completed a survey. We are extremely grateful to all of the educators who have taken the time to share their feedback, but we know we can do better (more than 4,500 educators completed last year's mid-year survey). Data collected from the mid-year surveys will directly impact upcoming model-refinement decisions, and it is critical that we hear from as many Rhode Island educators as possible. Please share the following survey links with all of the educators in your LEA and encourage them to have their voice heard.

Teacher survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/13-14MYTE>

Support professional survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/13-14MYSP>

Building administrator survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/13-14MYBA>

Central office administrator survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/13-14MYCO>

11. New Teachscape calibration tool available

Personnel evaluating teachers who passed the initial observation training and scoring practice in Teachscape can help maintain their accuracy by utilizing the new calibration tool. The calibration

tool is available from through April 30 and includes: videos of classrooms specific to the grade level the observer is responsible for evaluating, instant feedback on scores with rationale for the correct scores, and recommendations for improving accuracy. Evaluators can access the Teachscape calibration tool through the RIDEmap portal.

Finance:

12. RIDE accepting Consolidated Resource Plan amendments through February 21

RIDE is now accepting submissions of amendment requests for currently approved Consolidated Resource Plans (CRPs) through Friday, **February 21**. Preliminary Final Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 allocations to LEAs have been calculated and loaded into AcceleGrants for the following consolidated programs: Titles I, II, and III and IDEA - Part B and Preschool. Finalization of these allocations is pending RIDE review of LEA data for Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements.

In order to facilitate the amendment process, you can find the following documents posted within the Amendment section of the AcceleGrant's Document Library:

- FY 13-14 CRP Amendment Guidance including Appendix A - Program Requirements and Appendix B – RIDE Contact Persons;
- FY 13-14 Preliminary Final Allocations by CRP Program;
- Final Student Enrollments Fall 12 – Public and Private (for determining final private school equitable shares for Title II (A) and Final Limited English Proficient Counts Spring 13 –

- Public & Private (for determining final nonpublic-school equitable shares under Title III); and
- FY 13-14 Updated Private School Participation Worksheets for the IDEA (Part B and Preschool) programs within the CRP application.

The overall amendment process remains unchanged from last year. A submission of an amendment request requires a system status change to “Superintendent Approved” for a review and final approval by RIDE to occur. The flexibility provision, which can be utilized to avoid the necessity of certain amendment requests, remains in force. As a general rule, any proposed change in the total approved budget amount or significant change in the scope, goals, or intent of an approved program will require an amendment request. If attempting to eliminate a prior approved budget line item in AcceleGrants, do not delete the detail line from the system but instead change the amount of the budget request to zero. Please see the Amendment Guidance and Appendix A for further amendment details. As always, amendment requests must be approved by RIDE before LEA implementation.

Please note that LES FY 2013-2014 (restricted) indirect cost rates have not yet been approved by RIDE. LEA indirect rates will be loaded into AcceleGrants soon after review and final approval by RIDE is completed.

Questions regarding the amendment process may be directed to David Luther, at 222-4652 or at david.luther@ride.ri.gov. A complete listing of RIDE CRP program and fiscal contacts is also provided within the Amendment Guidance document to provide you with specific contacts for any program and fiscal questions

you may have. The amendment guidance (Amendment Guidance for 2013 – 2014) is posted [here](#).

Thank you for your continued support.

We will send this message to all business managers.

From the U.S. Department of Education

13. Education Secretary urges parents to unite “against academic failure”

Last week, Education Secretary Arne Duncan addressed the National Assessment Governing Board Summit for Parent Leaders. His message was:

Collectively, parents have the power to transform educational opportunity in this country. We must stop fighting the wrong fights and unite against our common enemy—and that's academic failure.

You can read his entire speech [here](#).

From other organizations

14. RIASCD conference scheduled for February 8

Please see this message from RIASCD:

On **February 8**, at Johnston High School, pre-service and beginning teachers are invited to the 11th annual RIASCD Pre-Service Conference to hear the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year, Patricia Page, and to select among a number of

timely workshops provided by Rhode Island practitioners. Workshop topics include differentiated instruction, social and emotional Learning, English-language learner strategies, the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments, and a number of technology-related topics. Registration is open on our website:

www.riascd.org

15. It's My Heart to award five scholarships

Please see this notice from the New England Chapter of It's My Heart:

The New England Chapter of It's My Heart is offering 5 scholarships. Each one is in the amount of \$500 for 2014. The scholarships are awarded to qualified high-school and college students who either have been diagnosed with Congenital Heart Defect (CHD), been the recipient of a heart transplant, or those who have a family member (sibling, child, parent) or close relative diagnosed with CHD.

If you would like more information about our group, just check out our website. As our general website is under construction, you can learn more about our specific chapter by going to www.itsmyheart.org, clicking on Community, scrolling down to IMH chapters, and then scrolling down to New England. The scholarship application can be download directly from there.

You can also access the scholarship application and information by going to these direct links:

[http://www.itsmyheart.org/images/forms/IMHNE_2014
CHD_Scholarship_Info_Final.pdf](http://www.itsmyheart.org/images/forms/IMHNE_2014_CHD_Scholarship_Info_Final.pdf)
[http://www.itsmyheart.org/images/forms/IMHNE_2014
CHD_Scholarship_Application_Final2.pdf](http://www.itsmyheart.org/images/forms/IMHNE_2014_CHD_Scholarship_Application_Final2.pdf)

16. New England Tech to hold open house on February 4

Please see this message from the New England Institute of Technology:

Tuesday, **February 4**, from 3 to 7 p.m. is the New England Institute of Technology open house, Tech Nite.

Tech Nite is always a great way for your students and their families to explore New England Tech. Our Technical Faculty, Career Services, and Admissions staff will be available to discuss career options available. Tours of the classrooms and labs are offered.

Please feel free to share this information with your parents and students.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsk9ftBqoj4&sns=em>

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/CommissionerDeborahA
Gist/FieldMemos.aspx](http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/CommissionerDeborahAGist/FieldMemos.aspx)