

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo  
Friday, March 18, 2016**

**Notes from Commissioner Wagner**

1. Council to review [Diploma System](#), graduation requirements
2. *Reminder:* High-school students to elect representatives on [Student Advisory Council](#); selections due **April 22**
3. Governor Raimondo nominates three to [Postsecondary Council](#)
4. Three R.I. schools presenting at regional conference on [high-school redesign](#)
5. Warwick students win Ocean State [Automotive Technology](#) Competition
6. Central Falls student wins R.I. [Poetry Out Loud](#) competition
7. Barrington student wins Pi Day [mathematics](#) competition
8. [RI-CAN](#) publishes report on public education in R.I.
9. R.I. is tops in [Farm to School](#) Program participation

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

***Educator Quality:***

10. RIDE to hold informational session on [Title II](#) funding on **April 7**

11. LEAs asked to complete survey by **April 1** on educator [induction](#) – **Action Item**

**Data Collection:**

12. Reports due **June 20** on funds expended for [interventions](#) for general-education students – **Action Item**
13. *Reminder:* [Funding Formula](#) Reports due **today** (March 18)
14. *Reminder:* Several [data collections](#) open, due this month and next month

**Assessments:**

15. *Reminder:* LEAs asked to maintain student-enrollment, personal-needs [profile data](#) in advance of PARCC testing
16. *Reminder:* LEAs asked to conduct [infrastructure trials](#) before PARCC testing window opens

**Instruction:**

17. Information session for teachers on [computer science](#) to be held **Wednesday**; registration open for TEALS program

**From other state agencies**

18. RIEMA offering grants for [emergency preparedness](#)

**From other organizations**

19. Harvard Kennedy School offering awards for [governance, innovation](#)
20. School offers R.I. students chance to speak with an astronaut who is about the [International Space Station](#)
21. Rhode Island Foundation offers \$1.5 million in [scholarships](#)
22. [Mathematics Teachers Association](#) spring meeting scheduled for **May 5**; awards nominations sought
23. Nomination deadline for [Presidential Awards](#) for math, science teaching is **April 1**

### **Action Item Calendar**

**Today** (March 18): [Funding Formula Reports - Due](#)  
March 31: [Textbook Data Collection – Due](#)  
April 1 – Educator Induction Survey due (see [below](#))  
June 20 – Reports on interventions due (see [below](#))

### **Notes from Commissioner Wagner**

1. **Council to review Diploma System, graduation requirements**

As you are aware from recent Field Memos and other communications, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education is soon to consider revisions to the current Secondary School Regulations on our Diploma System and statewide graduation requirements. We have scheduled for next week a series of community conversations on our Diploma System. Our plan is to gather feedback from these and other meetings and to present recommendations to the Council next month. The Council would then begin the process of developing changes to the regulations and moving on to the next step: public hearings prior to a final vote on the revised regulations.

We have received some inquiries regarding the current status of the Diploma System and graduation requirements. The Council has agreed that there will be no statewide graduation requirements regarding standardized assessments until the Class of 2021. Of course school committees may adopt their own local graduation requirements, but under current state law there can be no graduation requirements regarding standardized assessments until the Class of 2017.

2. ***Reminder: High-school students to elect representatives on Student Advisory Council; selections due April 22***

We have sent this message to all high-school principals:

State law calls for the establishment of a student advisory council to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. The [legislation](#) (R.I.G.L. §16-60-2[c]) states that the student advisory council shall consist of one elected high-school student representative from each public secondary school in Rhode Island.

According to the law, each public secondary school shall hold elections for its representative no earlier than March 1 and no later than the end of the second full week in April (this year, April

15). Each high school shall elect one representative, and that student must be enrolled as a student in grade 9, 10, or 11. Members of the student advisory council will serve from May 1 of the year that they are elected until the last day of April of the following year.

I encourage you to begin the election process in your school as soon as possible. By **April 22**, please forward the name and email address of the elected student as well as the name and email address of a point of contact at the school to Angela Teixeira ([angela.teixeira@ride.ri.gov](mailto:angela.teixeira@ride.ri.gov)), in the Commissioner's Office at RIDE. Once we receive the names of all of the elected students, we will plan for an organizational meeting in May.

Finally, the law also stipulates that, before June 1, the student advisory council shall elect a chairperson from among its members. During the week of April 25, we will seek the names of those who wish to be considered for the position of chairperson. The chairperson will serve as an ex-officio and nonvoting member of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education for a term of one year, beginning on June 1.

Please feel free to call Angela Teixeira, at 222-8435, if you have questions or would like additional information about the student advisory council.

### **3. Governor Raimondo nominates three to Postsecondary Council**

Governor Raimondo has nominated three new members to the Council on Postsecondary Education (and the Board of Education):

- Colonel Vivian L. Caruolo, Esq., a Deputy at the United States Property and Fiscal Office for Rhode Island, where she oversees daily operations;
- Heather D. Crosby, the founder and owner of Matheys Lane Capital Management, an investment firm in Providence; and
- Timothy J. DelGiudice, the Strategic Initiatives and Growth Senior Program Manager at Raytheon, a defense contractor where he has worked since 2007.

On confirmation, they will replace John J. Smith, Jr., Kerry I. Rafanelli, Esq., and July Ouellette, whose terms have ended.

A news release on the nominations is posted here:

<http://www.ri.gov/press/view/27091>.

#### 4. **Three R.I. schools presenting at regional conference on high-school redesign**

Several Rhode Island educators are making “action presentation” on high-school redesign this week at the New England Secondary School Consortium regional conference, “High School Redesign in Action.” The consortium selected the presenting schools the presenting schools “not only for their exemplary work but also for their extraordinary commitment to making sure every student has a chance to succeed, to live a fulfilled and meaningful life, and to make a positive contribution to the world in which they live.”

The schools and programs making presentations at the conference are:

Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, Coventry: Jennifer Graham (teacher) and Courtney Macropoulos (teacher)

Blackstone Academy Charter School: Kyleen Carpenter (head of school), John Horton (grade 9 dean; science teacher), Stacy Joslin (grade 10 dean; social studies teacher), and Carolyn Sheehan (executive director)

Woonsocket High School and Riverzedge Arts: Rebekah Greenwald (executive director), Karen Barbosa (expanded learning & youth development director), Liz Holohan (ELO coordinator)

Thanks to all for your commitment to re-imagining our schools and for representing our state at this regional conference.

5. **Warwick students win Ocean State Automotive Technology Competition**

Two students in the Automotive Technology program at the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center, Joel Cullen and Shelby Lavoie, won this year's Ocean State Automotive Technology Competition. The competition is sponsored by the Rhode Island Auto Dealers Association and the New England Institute of Technology. Joel and Shelby will represent Rhode Island at the National Automotive Technology Competition, at the New York International Automobile Show on March 29 and 30. Good luck to Joel and Shelby in this national competition!

6. **Central Falls student wins R.I. Poetry Out Loud competition**

Congratulations to Austin Paulhus, of Central Falls High School, winner of the state finals of the Poetry Out Loud competition. Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program, in which contesting students recite works they have selected from an anthology of classic and contemporary poetry. Sponsors are the State Council on the Arts, VSA Arts Rhode Island, and the R.I. Teaching Artists Center. As the state

finalist, Austin will compete in the national finals in Washington, D.C., in May. Good luck at the nationals, Austin!

**7. Barrington student wins Pi Day mathematics competition**

Jonny Chang, a freshman at Barrington High School, won the annual American Mathematical Society annual Rhode Island Pi Day (March 14, i.e., 3-14-16) competition, Who Wants to Be a Mathematician. The runner-up was Kyle Coughlin, a senior at Classical High School, Providence. Congratulations to Jonny and Kyle. A video of the competition is here:

<https://youtu.be/Me3xXhmZR8s>.

**8. RI-CAN publishes report on public education in R.I.**

Our friends at RI-CAN have just published their annual report, “The State of Public Education in Rhode Island.” According to RI-CAN, they have designed the report to show “where our education system stands and how it has changed over time.” The report compares Rhode Island public education with education systems in other states and across the nation. The report also includes data on postsecondary education and on the workforce. You can access the report here:

<http://ristateofed.ri-can.org/>

**9. R.I. is tops in Farm to School Program participation**

Based on a survey that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administered, Rhode Island has the first in the country on the percentage of school districts – 90 percent – that participate the Farm to School Program. The program brings fresh produce to school cafeterias and provides hands-on learning to students, showing them



where their food comes from through farm visits and nutrition education. Information on the program and on the national survey is available here:

<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/find-your-school-district>

The USDA also encourages you to find your school district on this list and nominate the district for a “Once in a Melon” Award:

<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/find-your-school-district/rhode-island>

## From RIDE

### ***Educator Quality:***

#### **10. RIDE to hold informational session on Title II funding on April 7**

RIDE will be offering a Title II, Part A session on April 7 from 9 to 11 a.m., at the Rhode Island Foundation, 1 Union Station, Providence. This will be an opportunity to meet with RIDE staff to receive guidance on the appropriate uses of teacher-quality funding and to review the annual Consolidated Resource Plan application and the Title II, Part A monitoring application.

Additionally, we will share potential new Title II, Part A flexibility and spending opportunities under the Every Student Succeeds Act and update you on the Highly Qualified guidance for the 2016-17 school year.

If you have any questions about this session, contact Mary Keenan, at [mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov](mailto:mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8497.

11. **LEAs asked to complete survey by April 1 on educator induction – Action Item**

RIDE has been collaborating with West Bay Collaborative to continue to find ways to provide financial support for a regional induction model. At this time, we're seeking input regarding LEA interest in participating in a regional induction model. By **April 1**, please complete a short survey that will help guide our work for the 2016-17 school year. Your responses to this survey are not committing you to anything. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Hilda Potrzeba, at [hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov](mailto:hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov).

To complete the survey please go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/btinduction>.

**Data Collection:**

12. **Reports due June 20 on funds expended for interventions for general-education students – Action Item**

Any general-education students in grades K through 12 who received academic or behavioral interventions provided through Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) funds from IDEA Part B must be counted and reported to RIDE.

This reporting is due by **June 20**, with a preliminary data submission on **May 16**; final reporting is due before the close of the school year while program staff are in school in case RIDE has clarification requests.

LEAs that voluntarily chose to use CEIS funds must report student participation.

Further information on this reporting is available at:

<http://ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Instructional-Resources/Reponse-to-Intervention/CEIS%20Memo%202016.pdf>

Also, an informational PowerPoint on this reporting is viewable at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Special-Education/Special-Education-Regulations/EIS-tracking-and-reporting.ppt>

13. **Reminder: Funding Formula Reports due today (March 18)**

Signed Funding Formula reports are due by 4 p.m. **today** (March 18). The “ADM - State Calculated,” “Snapshot, as of date 3/14/16,” and “Submission” reports must be reviewed, signed, and e-mailed to RIDE ([eRIDEinternal@ride.ri.gov](mailto:eRIDEinternal@ride.ri.gov)) once the duplicates are at zero.

If you have any questions about the funding-formula reports, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at:

<https://support.ride.ri.gov/tickets/new>.

14. **Reminder: Several data collections open, due this month and next month**

The following are upcoming data-collection da:

- **Today** (March 18): [Funding Formula Reports - Due](#)

- March 31: [Textbook Data Collection – Due](#)
- April 7: [CTE Collection for Approved Programs - Opens](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

### ***Assessments:***

15. ***Reminder: LEAs asked to maintain student-enrollment, personal-needs profile data in advance of PARCC testing***

LEAs should be maintaining their student-enrollment and personal-needs profile data within Pearson Access Next for the upcoming PARCC tests. There are several PARCC operational reports that you may find helpful:

- Students enrolled in more than one organization
- Students registered but not assigned to a test
- Students with ELA but no Math
- Students with Math but no ELA
- Students with online test but not assigned to session
- Students with multiple tests of the same subject area

RIDE will continue providing reports on the RIDEmap District Exchange that identify any deviation between PARCC data and eRIDE data to help LEAs with keeping the PARCC data up to date. Please note that District Exchange does not work with Safari on a Mac. If using a Mac, you will need to install another browser (Chrome, Firefox, e.g.)

16. ***Reminder:* LEAs asked to conduct infrastructure trials before PARCC testing window opens**

LEAs should conduct infrastructure trials with their staff to prepare them prior to the PARCC test window. Infrastructure trials provide important hands-on experience for teachers and administrators in a controlled environment in order to get them comfortable with the PARCC testing technology and procedures. It also provides LEA technology staff the ability to test the PARCC software and the school's technical infrastructure's ability to handle the extra demand during the test window.

***Instruction:***

17. **Information session for teachers on computer science to be held Wednesday; registration open for TEALS program**

Governor Raimondo and Chief Innovation Officer Richard Culatta announced the launch of CS4RI last week at Tolman High School, in Pawtucket, to an enthusiastic crowd of students, teachers, administrators, postsecondary-education partners, industry partners, and community members. The response of teachers, school leaders, and administrators who are actively engaged in finding meaningful ways to bring to their schools and to expand high-quality computer-science education opportunities in their schools was overwhelming. We are well on our way to achieving the goal of having computer science taught in all public schools by 2017. The on-boarding process for schools to participate in CS4RI for the 2016-17 school year is open!

We strongly encourage teachers to attend the first CS4RI Teacher Information Session, to be held on **Wednesday** (March 23), from 4 to 5:15 p.m., at the Faculty Dining Center in Donovan Dining Center, at Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Ave., Providence. There will

be a brief presentation from the CS4RI program partners followed by Q&A and a reception with light refreshments. Teachers will be able to meet the CS4RI program partners, get details and dates for summer professional development opportunities, check out curriculum offerings, and find out how they can bring computer-science opportunities into their schools and classrooms.

Additionally, schools interested in the TEALS program – which pairs computer-science professionals with classroom educators – should apply to participate by Thursday, **March 31**. Registering signals interest in the program and is not a commitment to participate in the TEALS program. Registering will allow organizers to scale up in Rhode Island and begin to secure the industry volunteers for the upcoming year.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Visit <http://www.cs4ri.org> for additional details.

### **From other state agencies**

#### **18. RIEMA offering grants for emergency preparedness**

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) is announcing Preparedness Grant funding opportunities from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for state, local, and tribal governments, as well as nonprofit organizations and the private sector.

FEMA and the USDOT are providing Preparedness Grant funding to improve the nation's readiness in preventing, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. These grants focus on the implementation of a whole-community approach to building and sustaining a more secure and resilient nation.

The three Preparedness Grants that are available for Rhode Island in this current funding opportunity are the State Homeland Security Program Grant (SHSP), the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), and the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant (HMEP). SHSP and EMPG are provided by FEMA while HMEP is provided by the USDOT. Each of these grants aims to support a comprehensive, all-hazards emergency-preparedness system by bolstering training and plan-development efforts.

“The federal government has allocated over \$7 million in Preparedness Grant funding for the State of Rhode Island,” said RIEMA Director Peter Gaynor. “In an effort to assist those eligible applicants with obtaining some of that funding, our agency will be hosting grant roll-out meetings focused on discussing the federal grant application process. These meetings will consist of an overview of the grants available, their scope of work, and how to apply for them. Additionally, I would like to thank the offices of Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, as well as the offices of Congressmen Jim Langevin and David Cicilline, for their continued support of our grants program.”

See below for the dates and locations of the upcoming grant roll-out meetings:

Amica Mutual Insurance Company – March 29  
100 Amica Way, Lincoln  
9 -11 a.m.

Portsmouth Town Hall – April 1  
2200 E. Main Rd.  
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

For more information about FEMA's Preparedness Grants, visit [www.fema.gov/preparedness-non-disaster-grants](http://www.fema.gov/preparedness-non-disaster-grants). For information about the USDOT's HMEP grant, visit [www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/grants-program](http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/grants-program).

For questions about the grant roll-out meetings contact Mike Hogan, RIEMA's Grants Coordinator, at 462-7063.

### **From other organizations**

#### **19. Harvard Kennedy School offering awards for governance, innovation**

Applications are now being accepted for the \$100,000 Innovations in American Government Awards. Offered by Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, the Innovations Award is the nation's premier award for the public sector. It recognizes programs that demonstrate creative and effective government at its best. All units of government — federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial — from all policy areas are eligible to apply for recognition.

This year, the Ash Center is also once again offering the Roy and Lila Ash Innovations Award for Public Engagement in Government, a special Innovations Award that will recognize government-led programs that demonstrate novel and effective approaches to increasing public engagement and participation in the governance of towns, cities, states, and the nation.

The winners of the Innovations in American Government Award and the Roy and Lila Ash Award will each receive a \$100,000 grant to support replication and dissemination activities in 2017. Top finalists will also receive monetary grants. Applications are due on **April 15**.



Applications and additional information are available at:

[www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu](http://www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu)

20. **School offers R.I. students chance to speak with an astronaut who is about the International Space Station**

Ever dream of talking to an astronaut? Imagine speaking directly with the International Space Station (ISS) while the crew zooms overhead! Think of a really extraordinary question, and you may be chosen to be one of the first students in Rhode Island to ever talk to the space station via a special ham-radio link installed at All Saints STEAM Academy, in Middletown.

Three “Ask Astronaut Tim” winners will be chosen. If your question is picked, you and two of your guests or chaperones, will get to participate in the “Ask Astronaut Tim” event at All Saints STEAM Academy.

Rhode Island’s contact with the space station contact will be scheduled for the week of May 2 during school hours. An ISS scheduler will assign the exact day and time of the “space chat” 7 to 10 days prior to the event. The website for this event is [www.RISpaceStation.com](http://www.RISpaceStation.com), and the event is planned to be live-streamed to the public.

Here’s what you need know:

- Contest entrants must be current Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup>-grade Rhode Island students.
- Questions must be to the point and composed in one short sentence.
- Questions must be original. Please be creative, be unique, and think “out of this world”!

- Questions must be submitted via the online form at <http://bitly.com/AskAstroTim> no later than **April 10**.
- Winners will be notified no later than Monday, April 25.
- Winners must provide their own transportation to and from All Saints STEAM Academy, located at 915 West Main Rd., Middletown. Phone: 848-4300.

How can you be among the first in Rhode Island to talk to space? Do your homework!

There is a wealth of International Space Station educational material, for all grade levels, available online at your fingertips. Here are some links to get you started:

<https://principia.org.uk>

[http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/stem\\_on\\_station/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/stem_on_station/index.html)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Peake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Peake)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy\\_Kopra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_Kopra)

<http://www.iss-casis.org/>

<http://www.ariss.org/>

Questions? Ask the project coordinators, Anita Brouse (Principal, All Saints STEAM Academy) and Mike Cullen (STEAM adviser / event project manager), at [missioncontrol@RISpaceStation.com](mailto:missioncontrol@RISpaceStation.com).

#### 21. **Rhode Island Foundation offers \$1.5 million in scholarships**

The Rhode Island Foundation is offering students more than \$1.5 million in scholarships. Dozens of individual, family, and organizational donors established scholarship funds at the Foundation to help students defray educational expenses such as tuition, room and board, fees, and books. [Information about requirements and deadlines](#) is posted on the Foundation's website.

“Each of these scholarships turns dreams into reality for our donors and the recipients,” said Neil Steinberg, the Foundation’s president and CEO. “The effect of their generosity will ripple through our community for generations.”

**22. Mathematics Teachers Association spring meeting scheduled for May 5; awards nominations sought**

Register today for Dan Meyer’s keynote presentation on **May 5** at the Radisson in Warwick; the Rhode Island Mathematics Teachers Association spring meeting will be the culmination of our year on modeling and technology. It’s an event that is not to be missed!

Title: Math is Power not Punishment

Descriptions: We often offer students shortcuts, strategies, and skills before students understand their origin, their value, and the millions of hours of work they’ve saved mathematicians throughout history. We’ll look at techniques for putting students in a position to need these challenging skills so they feel like power, not punishment.

[Register online](#) today.

Additionally, the Rhode Island Mathematics Teachers Association is seeking nominations for two of their annual awards. The first, Rookie of the Year, is awarded to a teacher who has shown outstanding promise and has instructed students in grades K through 12 for three years or fewer. The second award, Student Recognition, is granted to a student who is enrolled in grades K through 12 and has exhibited outstanding achievement, effort, or growth in mathematics. Applications can be obtained through the RIMTA

website: <https://sites.google.com/site/rimtamath/>. Nominations are accepted through **April 1**.

23. **Nomination deadline for Presidential Awards for math, science teaching is April 1**

The deadline for teachers to submit application for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) application is a little more than a month away. It's not too late for your faculty to send in their entries to represent your district in this prestigious program.

PAESMT is the highest honor for a math or science (including computer science) teacher in the United States and more than 4,400 outstanding educators have been recognized since the program's inception in 1983.

Although the application can seem a bit overwhelming at first, the PAEMST Team offers several resources to help your teachers navigate the process. We've outlined those resources below:

*Online Webinars* – The PAEMST team is hosting several Applicant Webinars each week to provide an in depth look at the application, as well as answer your questions as you work through the process. In addition, there are several Alumni Webinars each month that feature former PAEMST awardees and provide a unique perspective of their experiences with the program. To view a full schedule of webinars and register for a session, please click [here](#) and enter "PAEMST" in the search box.

*State Coordinators (SC)* –SC's are here to help. They can answer any questions you may have and provide some tips on how to complete your application. You can find your SC by clicking on "My State Coordinator" along the left hand side of your portal home page.

*PAEMST Portal* – One of the best places to find information and additional support is in your application portal. To access the portal, log in to [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org). Under the application tab, check out the “Tool & Tips” section on the right side of the page, where you can find recorded versions of the webinars, FAQs for the application video, and more helpful resources.

*Help Center* - Still can't find an answer to one of your questions? Is something holding you back from completing your application? You can always contact the PAEMST Team at [info@paemst.org](mailto:info@paemst.org) or (855) 723-6780 (PAEMST-0). We are here to help!

Becoming a PAEMST awardee can be a truly life-changing experience for your teachers. PAEMST awardees will gather in Washington, D.C. for a [series of events](#) as tribute to their accomplishments, and will receive a certificate signed by the President and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation (NSF). With great teachers throughout our state, we know our students have bright futures. We hope you'll encourage your teachers to submit applications for the 2015-2016 application cycle!

Don't forget, the nomination deadline is **April 1** and application deadline is May 1!

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

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