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Friday, April 29, 2016**

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Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Council considering revisions to graduation requirements

Under current graduation requirements, Rhode Island students earn a diploma by earning 20 course credits and successfully completing either a senior project or a portfolio of their work. These requirements are comprehensive, but the Diploma System could do an even better job to promote rigor while expanding options for students.

As we consider revisions to the Diploma System, we must balance two risks. If we set the bar for graduation too high or too soon, we will exclude too many students, with lifelong consequences. If we set the bar too low or adjust the bar downward as we realize the implications of new requirements, we will have failed to challenge students and undermined confidence in our system and the diploma.

Over the past several months, we held 22 meetings with education stakeholders and 4 community sessions to receive input and feedback

on the graduation requirements from students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and community members. A central theme emerged: Our 21st-century graduates deserve better than a one-size-fits-all diploma system.

On Tuesday (April 26), based on the feedback received, we proposed a revised set of graduation requirements to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. This proposal introduced two additional menus of options that could lead to designations that personalize the diploma and better reflect a student's "pathway" through school.

Under this proposal, students would earn a diploma based on the requirements currently in place. But all students will have two additional options – or designations – to make the diploma their own. One of the options for personalization is based on assessments; the other is based on advanced course sequences.

First, the optional "Commissioner's Seal" designation would indicate that the student met a statewide standard in literacy and numeracy on one or more of a menu of assessment options, such as PARCC, AP, SAT, or an industry-based career-and-technical education credential.

Second, the "Pathway Endorsement" designation would indicate that the student completed a defined advanced-course sequence based on his or her interests and strengths, such as the arts, world languages, science, or community service.

These two designations will provide additional information about skill attainment to students, families, colleges, and employers.

Just as we sought public input in developing these graduation requirements, we will seek input over the coming months as we review our school and district accountability systems. We can and should

develop goals that hold schools and districts accountable for increasing percentage of students who attain the Commissioner's Seal or a Pathway Endorsement.

Governor Raimondo and other elected officials, business leaders, and leaders in postsecondary education are focused on results, and rightly so. This diploma system approach will ensure that schools continue to focus on advanced coursework for all students, on student engagement, on teaching and learning, and on providing students with pathway options for graduation.

It is the job of a school to offer rigorous and relevant experiences that prepare students for success in college and the workplace. It is the job of students to earn a diploma that reflects their interests and strengths and launches them on the next phase of their lives.

These assessment- and course-based options for students can challenge our schools to do even better without creating new barriers to graduation for students.

The Council will review and discuss the proposed graduation requirements again next month (May) and, on approval, will send the regulations out for public comment and further revisions. We anticipate final review and approval in the fall, when the Class of 2021, the first class to be affected by the changes, will be in 8th grade.

Let's empower our schools to design and provide rigorous and relevant interest- and strength-based pathways for students. Let's empower our students to make the diploma their own. Let's provide more information about skills and readiness to families, employers, and colleges. Let's keep everyone focused on teaching and learning by maintaining accountability for results that matter.

You can read the proposed regulations here:

<http://media.ride.ri.gov/BOE/CESE/042616%20Meeting/Encl6b.pdf>.

Here are a set of draft FAQs on the proposed regulations:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Diploma-System/Regulations_FAQ.pdf .

2. Council seeks one-year reprieve in court ruling summer-school funding

Two weeks ago we notified you of a recent Superior Court ruling (Giannini v Council on Elementary and Secondary Education et al., C.A. No. PC 2014-5240, March 30) that reverses a decision of the Elementary and Secondary Council and finds, in essence, that school districts may not charge fees for summer-school courses. As an update, on Tuesday (April 26) the Council filed two motions with the Court regarding this summer-school decision. The first, a Motion to Stay, does not dispute the ruling itself but instead seeks flexibility on the timing of its implementation, as summer school is only three months away and your budget and plans are most likely finalized for Summer 2016. The Council is requesting a one-year reprieve to allow for your adequate budgetary planning. Also on Tuesday, the Council filed a Motion to Reconsider, noting that it disputes one aspect of the ruling, the finding that school committees can finance summer school only with federal, state, or municipal funds, as the school committee itself cannot raise funds to supplement budgetary items. We will keep you informed about any developments in this matter.

3. RIDE to mark Teacher Appreciation Week

Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and to mark the occasion we will send this message to all teachers:

There is amazing work happening in our schools, and you are the ones making it all happen – on-the-ground heroes whose influence extends well beyond the classroom.

I thank every teacher in Rhode Island.

I have a simple guiding principle: We will support whatever helps teachers teach and helps students learn.

Stay tuned this week on social media as we applaud you and all Rhode Island teachers. #thankRIteachers

I am also reaching out to ask everyone to thank Rhode Island teachers. Here is a short video that we will share on social media:

<http://media.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/thankRIteachers2016.mp4>

4. RIDE posts stories about “Amazing Schools” on website

Earlier this year we asked you to send us one or two brief accounts of amazing things happening in your school – preferably, initiatives involving teamwork. We like to draw attention to programs and initiatives that are innovative and effective when we speak with community groups, business leaders, elected officials, and people in the education field. We have posted your submissions to our “Amazing Schools” request on our website, at:

www.ride.ri.gov/Amazing.

Check it out, and send us more! Send for each an email of no more than 100 words or a one-minute video clip, using the subject line “Amazing,” to info@ride.ri.gov. We’ll continue to spread the word.

5. 10 R.I. students selected as Presidential Scholar semifinalists

The U.S. Department of Education Commission on Presidential Scholars has announced that there are 689 semifinalists in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, including 10 from Rhode Island schools. The program recognizes and honors some of the most distinguished graduating seniors in the country. Last year, the program was expanded to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education (CTE) fields. The Commission will select up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars from among the semifinalists. The semifinalists from Rhode Island schools are:

- Erin C. Blake, of Cranston High School West (CTE candidate)
- Angela F. Crenshaw, Classical High School, Providence
- Angela T. Gattinella, Smithfield High School (CTE candidate)
- Nicholas R. Guarino, East Providence Senior High School (CTE candidate)
- Malcolm B. Meyerson, Rocky Hill School
- Grace E. Miner, East Greenwich High School
- Timothy J. Pratt, Rogers High School, Newport (CTE candidate)
- Vivian K. Tian, Barrington High School
- Amy L. Vogel, Wheeler School
- Xiao Yi Wu, East Greenwich High School

Congratulations and good luck to these 10 excellent students!

6. Cumberland principal named R.I. Secondary School Principal of the Year

The Rhode Island Association of School Principals has named Dr. Jason (Jay) Masterson, principal of the Joseph L. McCourt Middle School, in Cumberland, as the 2016 Rhode Island Secondary School Principal of the Year. Congratulations to Dr. Masterson on receiving this honor

7. School for the Deaf team wins national literacy competition

A team of students from the Rhode Island School for the Deaf won its division in the Gallaudet University Battle of the Books national competition. The competition promotes literacy among middle-school students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Congratulations to the winning team from the School for the Deaf: Jayden Elia, Cole Evaristo, and Ellie Lister!

8. Davies students participating in national food-services competition

This weekend two teams from the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School will represent Rhode Island at the national ProStart competition, in Dallas, a program and competition for students studying food services. Davies advanced to nationals after winning first place in both Culinary and Management at the March 10 state competition held in Newport. Good luck at the national competition to all the Davies students and their teachers!

9. Warwick student to represent the U.S. an international skills competition

Jason Valdes, of the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center, will represent Rhode Island and the nation next week in Quebec at an invitational Olympic-style competition and leadership program, Compétences Québec/[Skills Canada](#). Jason will be competing in the

Design and Computer-aided Design event. Good luck in the competition!

10. Council to consider revised RIDE Table of Organization

On Tuesday we presented to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education a proposed revised Table of Organization for RIDE, for the Council approval at a future meeting. Over the past several months we have been looking at what our work is going to be going forward and asking what organizational changes we need to make to support this work. Our goal is to advance school in Rhode Island by supporting personalization, rigor, and relevance and by keeping teaching and learning at the forefront of our operations. Among changes we proposed to the Council are:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Naming Mary Ann Snider to a new position as Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning to lead the Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services; the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum; and the Office of Student, Community & Academic Supports, which at present is part of the Division of Accelerating School Performance;
- **Fiscal Operations:** Renaming the current Deputy Commissioner position to Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Operations; David Abbott will continue in this role and in his role as General Counsel; and
- **Innovation:** Renaming the Chief of Accelerating School Performance to the Chief of Innovation; Stephen Osborn will continue in this role, leading the new Office of College and Career Readiness (a merging of the Office of Multiple Pathways and the Office of Transformation and Charter Schools); the Office of Data, Analysis, and Research, which is at present part of the Division of

Teaching and Learning; and the Office of Network & Information Systems, which at present is part of the Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies.

We hope to continue to serve you, all other education stakeholders, and the members of the Rhode Island community even more effectively and efficiently in this new configuration.

11. Chief of Staff Kim Bright to leave RIDE for graduate program

As we also informed the Council on Tuesday, a really important member of our team is leaving RIDE to pursue a lifetime opportunity. Chief of Staff Kim Bright will leave RIDE at the end of June to begin a Master's in Public Administration graduate program at Harvard. Kim really helped me in my transition to Rhode Island and to the role of Commissioner. Kim helped me get to know the RIDE team, and she introduced me to key education stakeholders across the state. She has played a key role in the development of our Strategic Plan and in the development of many important on-going initiatives, such as the School and Family Empowerment Act. We will miss her at RIDE as she moves on to a new stage in her career.

From RIDE

Legal:

12. Decisions issued on residency, career-technical education

RIDE has issued the following three Commissioner's Decisions:

Student Doe previously lived with relatives in Warwick during her mother's extended illness. She now resides with her mother in

Coventry and must enroll in school there unless mother's intent to move to Warwick is actualized

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/009-16 C. Doe vs. Warwick S.D. 030416.pdf>

Students have the right to choose any RIDE-approved career-preparation program in the state subject only to the three limitations set forth in Section 5.1 of the current career and technical education regulations: availability of enrollment seats, lack of transportation for programs outside the student's school transportation region, and program admission standards.

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/010-16 MET V Chariho RSD 042016.pdf>

Student whose residence changed from North Providence to Providence after the end of the first semester is entitled to complete the second semester of the 2015-16 school year at North Providence High School.

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/011-16 In RE Residency of D Doe 040616.pdf>

Educators:

13. ***Action Item: New guidance documents posted on evaluations; all LEAs must submit educator-evaluation data to RIDE by July 8***

New documents related to educator-evaluation closeout have been posted on the [EPSS page](#) of the RIDE website under the heading "End of Year Information."

LEAs using the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS): The Final Effectiveness Rating Report (FERR) has changed since last year. Evaluators and LEA administrators should click the link labeled “*EPSS Closeout and Turnover*” on the EPSS page to review updated instructions on how to complete the FERR. Please note that evaluators must submit a FERR for *all* educators, including those who did not receive a full evaluation this year. LEAs must finalize their forms in EPSS by **July 8**.

LEAs *not* using EPSS: Some of the fields have changed since last year to reflect changes to some systems. Data managers and LEA configuration administrators should review the updated *Evaluation Data Submission Guidance* document, which provides details on how to submit data via CSV file. You will have between May 16 and July 8 to upload educator-evaluation data.

Please e-mail edeval@ride.ri.gov if you have any questions about submitting educator-evaluation data to RIDE or if you would like additional support.

14. Early certification renewal available now to most eCert users

Is your certificate expiring on **August 31**? Did you know that you can renew now? Don't wait until you're in the final throes of summer and suddenly realize that you've forgotten to renew. During your last days of vacation, you'll be stressing and wondering if your certification will be processed in time for the start of school.

Don't wait! You'll be happier this summer. Online certification renewal is easy and available now for most eCert users who hold Initial Certificates. Visit our webpage for more information:

www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorCertification.aspx

Instruction:

15. RIDE sets date for annual technology conference, seeks presentation proposals

Join more than 1,200 educators, school leaders, students, community members and edtech partners for the 5th Annual Innovation Powered by Technology Conference, to be held on **September 17**. We will explore how educators across the state are building the pathway to student success and finding ways to improve the teaching and learning experience. Connect with fellow educators and school leaders on the effective use of technology and digital learning. Collaborate with and be inspired by educators and students across the state. Immerse yourself in ideas, strategies, and resources. Meet face-to-face with well-respected professionals in your field.

RIDE is seeking presentation proposals to accelerate the implementation of high-quality blended and personalized learning, best and next practices in the integration of computer science in all schools, and productive next steps for us all to take in reimagining the learning experience. This conference will deepen thinking about personalized learning, 21st-century skills, and the digital-learning transition that will prepare our students for college, careers, and life.

Educators, school leaders, policy-makers, technology coordinators, coaches, and students are all encouraged to share implementation strategies, best practices, and lessons learned at the conference.

For more information about proposals for presenting at the conference and about the conference itself, visit:

<http://ride.ri.gov/conference>.

Career-Technical Education:

16. Webinars scheduled on CTE approval process, discretionary funding

During its April 2016 work session, Council on Elementary and Secondary Education discussed two resolutions submitted by the Career and Technical Education Board of Directors and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Trust. The resolutions focused on the CTE program review-and-approval process and on the distribution of federal and state discretionary funds.

The Council accepted and advanced the following positions:

- With consideration of the CTE Board and Trust interests, the CTE program review-and-approval processes and final approval decisions continue under RIDE authority; and
- As legislated, the CTE Board and CTE Trust have “advice and consent” participation as it pertains to RIDE policy relating to the distribution of federal and state discretionary funds.

As legislated, the CTE Trust maintains authority over private and philanthropic funds raised in support of career and technical education.

Informational webinars to share the Council positions and to answer questions will be held on:

Tuesday, May 10, at 11:30 a.m.:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7574257801540430337>

Webinar ID: 115-247-619

Friday, May 13, at 11 a.m.:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8970452850862707969>

Webinar ID: 133-800-995.

Data Collection:

17. Data-collection webinar scheduled for Tuesday (May 3)

For the **Tuesday** (May 3) webinar, we will review the procedures for finalizing evaluations in Educator Performance and Support System (for EPSS districts) and uploading data via a CSV file (for non-EPSS districts). We will provide an overview of changes made since last year and share timelines for closeout. Your SSO coordinator may want to attend this [webinar](#).

We are also working on bringing in a representative from the CTE program to discuss that collection and answer any questions you may have.

18. *Reminder: Roster Verification to begin on May 9*

The first stage of Roster Verification will begin on May 9 and run through May 23. During this stage principals will review the teacher, course, and section data submitted to RIDE. The second stage of review will open May 25 and run through June 3. During this time, teachers will review their rosters and principals will monitor the status of their teachers' progress. Once this second stage is completed, principals will verify and sign off on the rosters, between June 6 and

June 22. Please note that beginning this year teachers in grades 4-8 will participate in the roster verification process (as opposed to grades 3-7 in the past).

Updated user guides for principals and teachers are available at:

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/EducatorPerformanceandSupportSystem\(EPSS\).aspx](http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/EducatorPerformanceandSupportSystem(EPSS).aspx).

In preparation for this year's roster-verification process, please ensure that all principals are familiar with your policy regarding contributing educators. You can find our updated guidance on Establishing Teacher-Course-Student Connections at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/TCS%20guidance%202016%20FINAL.pdf>.

If you have any questions about roster verification, please submit a help desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

19. ***Reminder: Several data collections are open or due next month***

The following are upcoming data-collection deadlines for next month:

- [May 5: Roster Verification Principal Review \(Stage 1\) – Opens](#)
- [May 23: Roster Verification Principal Review \(Stage 1\) – Closes](#)
- [May 16: Preliminary Coordinated Early Intervening Services - Due](#)
- May 17: [Special Education Census – Due](#)
- May 17: [Special Education Census Reporting - Due](#)
- [May 24: Special Ed Census, Duplicate Resolution - Due](#)
- [May 24: Special Ed Census Reporting, Duplicate Resolution - Due](#)

- [May 25: Roster Verification Teacher Review \(Stage 2\) – 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:

20. Reduced fees for AP exams available for qualifying students

Under the U.S. Department of Education (USED) Advanced Placement Test Fee program, RIDE receives federal funding to provide College Board Advanced Placement tests to low-income students at a reduced rate. The purpose of the Advanced Placement Test Fee Reimbursement Program is to alleviate some of the financial burdens that prevent many economically disadvantaged students from taking the College Board Advanced Placement (AP).

The USED has confirmed the program funding levels for this year, and the funds will be available for students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, are currently enrolled in Advanced Placement classes, and plan on taking an exam. The College Board provides a \$30 fee reduction per exam for students with financial need. For each AP Exam taken with a fee reduction, the school forgoes its \$9 rebate, resulting in a cost of \$53 per exam for the student. The program will cover \$38 for each AP test taken by a qualifying student. Therefore, qualifying students are asked to contribute \$15 for each AP test they take.

More information can be found on the [AP Exam Waivers](#) page of the RIDE website and on the College Board [AP Exam Fee Assistance](#)

webpage. For questions about AP exam fees, please contact Cali Cornell, at cali.cornell@ride.ri.gov.

21. College Board to present information on new PSAT/SAT in meeting on May 26

Representatives from the College Board will attend the May 26 District Network Meeting to explain the SAT/PSAT test blueprint, connections to the Common Core State Standards, and administration details. We would like to open this meeting to a broader group so that superintendents, special education directors, EL directors, and high-school principals can attend.

As you know, Governor Raimondo included funding to support the administration of the SAT/PSAT to Rhode Island students beginning next year. Also under consideration is whether we should amend our high-school state testing program to include the SAT. We would like to make an informed and shared decision with LEA and school educators. Please consider joining us for this meeting on May 26, at 9 a.m., in Room 260 in the Shepard Building (255 Westminster St./80 Washington St., Providence).

22. *Reminder: Deadlines for requesting student exemption from PARCC, NECAP Science testing are at close of testing windows*

All requests for state-approved special consideration or exemption from PARCC and NECAP Science testing must be submitted online no later than the last day of the respective test window. All requests must be submitted 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. (Please note that parental refusals or requests for student non-participation in state assessments are *not* approved reasons for state-approved special consideration or exemption.)

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) or scanned and emailed to PARCC@ride.ri.gov.

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. You can also use this document to access the necessary forms for applying for exemption. This document is available on the RIDE website, at:

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

It is very important that you review the guidance document before attempting to submit requests. If you have any questions about exemptions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley, at 222-8494 or Kevon.Tucker-Seeley@ride.ri.gov.

From the U.S. Department of Education (USED)

23. USED releases “Nation’s Report Card” for grade 12

“[The Nation’s Report Card: 2015 Reading and Mathematics for Grade 12](#)” indicates scores were steady in reading but lower in math since 2013, while just 37 percent of students are academically ready for

college. (Note: Secretary King's statement on the results is available [here](#).)

24. USED seeks feedback regarding ESSA by May 25

Separate from our previous request for comments on potential areas for regulation under Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the U.S. Department of Education (USED) is seeking your input on areas of the law on which we could provide non-regulatory guidance to assist states, districts, and other grantees in understanding and implementing the new law.

As you may know, non-regulatory guidance is not binding and does not impose any new requirements beyond those in the law and regulations; rather, it is intended to help the public understand the law, how USED is interpreting the law, and to provide clarification and examples of best practices. We invite you to share your thoughts, comments, and suggestions on areas or specific new requirements of the ESSA that you think would benefit from such guidance. For example, USED seeks input on: ways to expand early learning; strategies to recruit, develop, and retain teachers and leaders (Title II); clarification of fiscal requirements; student support services (Title IV); and other areas where state and local agencies could benefit from additional guidance. In addition, USED plans on developing guidance regarding students in foster care, homeless children and youth, and English Learners (Title III).

Please provide your input by sending an email message to ESSA.guidance@ed.gov, noting the topic area(s) in the subject line. Also, please include within the body of your email message your name and, if applicable, the organization on behalf of which you are submitting comments. In order for your feedback to have the most impact, we encourage you to submit your comments by **May 25**.

25. USED launches i3 Development competition; applications due May 24

This week, the U.S. Department of Education launched the seventh and final Investing in Innovation (i3) Development competition. Educators working with school districts, nonprofits, and partner organizations can apply for grant awards up to \$3 million by **May 24**. Later this year, the USED will announce the i3 Validation and Scale-up competitions for applicants with more rigorous evidence supporting their proposed projects. In 2017, the new Education Innovation and Research program, established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will replace i3 as the USED signature program for driving innovation and scaling evidence-based practices.

This year, the i3 Development competition is encouraging innovations that maximize students' learning and engagement by transforming the school environment. For the first time, the USED is encouraging applicants to improve school climates and develop alternative strategies to exclusionary discipline. This allows schools, districts, and their partners to build on the extensive work underway through the Administration's [#ReThinkDiscipline](#) initiative. This year's competition also includes a focus on fostering schools' racial and socioeconomic diversity and closing gaps in opportunity for underserved students. Consistent with past years, this competition also promotes innovative strategies to support students and educators as they implement rigorous standards and aligned assessments, enhance students' non-cognitive skills, and serve students in rural areas.

To learn more about the 2016 i3 Development competition or promising i3 projects underway, go to:

<http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/innovation/investing-in-innovation-i3/>.

26. White House, USED release resources for teachers on STEM

Last week the White House, in close partnership with USED and Health and Human Services and [Invest in US](#), hosted the first-ever symposium to highlight the importance of promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning among the nation’s youngest children and celebrate more than 200 public and private sector [commitments](#) to promoting early STEM learning across the country. The agencies also released a set of early STEM resources for families and educators called “[Let’s Talk, Read, and Sing about STEM!](#)” These tip sheets – in English and Spanish – provide resources and recommendations for families, caregivers, and infant, toddler, and preschool educators on easy ways to incorporate STEM concepts and vocabulary into everyday routines, as well as suggestions for activities to engage young children in STEM learning ([video](#) and [joint blog post](#)). (Note: The agencies have also invited comment on some key questions to inform the development of a [joint policy statement](#) on the role of technology in early learning later this year.)

27. Grant opportunities announced for municipalities, schools

USED has announced two new grant opportunities:

States, municipalities, and tribes are [invited to apply](#) to become a [Performance Partnership Pilot](#) (P3). This initiative enables up to 10 pilots a year to test innovative, outcome-focused strategies to achieve significant improvements in educational, employment, and other outcomes for disconnected youth by blending together existing federal funding and seeking waivers of associated program requirements.

The [Magnet Schools Assistance Program](#) announced its [competition to support theme-based schools](#) that welcome a racially and socioeconomically diverse group of students and help ensure every student has an opportunity to excel academically. The competition will award \$91 million to 8 to 10 grantees. Applications are due by **June 1**.

From other organizations

28. URI, LaunchCode offer free computer-science class

LaunchCode and University of Rhode Island are partnering to bring CS50x to Rhode Island. Thanks to the support of Real Jobs Rhode Island, we are proud to offer CS50x Rhode Island free to all participants.

Applications are now open! Students are accepted on a rolling basis. We have a limited number of seats, so apply now.

CS50x Rhode Island is a live version of Harvard's Introduction to Computer Science class that leverages the local expertise of URI to provide a unique and supportive classroom experience. This class provides students with a foundation in computer programming that puts them on a path to launch a career in technology. Thanks to the support of Real Jobs Rhode Island, this class is free for all participants. This is CS50x Rhode Island!

- When: **May 9** thru September 1. Mondays and Thursdays, from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.
- Where: University of Rhode Island, Providence Campus (80 Washington Street)

If you are unsure if you are good fit for the class or If you have questions, please check out the [FAQs](#). For any other questions, please email us, at cs50xri@launchcode.org.

For more information, see:

<https://t.co/k6MSIIuXIJ>.

29. Highlander Institute seeks educators for 3rd cohort of Fuse RI Fellows; applications due May 6

The Highlander Institute is seeking rock-star educators to join the third cohort of Highlander Institute’s Fuse Fellowship. Would you be willing to join us in this movement and help us spread the word by forwarding this to the educators you support?

[You can find the fellowship application here](#). The application is due on **May 6**.

Developed by the [Highlander Institute](#), Fuse RI strives to share, implement, evaluate, and scale blended learning by working with educators and districts across the state. Highlander Institute assembles and supports a “dream team” of Fuse RI Fellows – educators and administrators from schools around Rhode Island. Fuse Fellows partner with another district (separate from the one they work in) and collaborate with that district to assess readiness, analyze data, and help

disseminate blended-learning best practices based on each district's specific needs.

If you'd like to learn more, [check out the Fuse RI site](#), which includes a video explaining the Fuse Fellowship and Frequently Asked Questions about the fellowship.

If you have any questions about Fuse RI, please direct them to mklein@highlanderinstitute.org.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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