Commissioner’s Weekly Field Memo
Friday, May 17, 2013

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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
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) 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 (Charlito)
• 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 (Charlito)
• 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.

If you have any questions regarding the content of the questions, please contact Midge Sabatini, at 222-8952 or 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.

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). 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 forward 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 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