

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, June 24, 2016**

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. *Reprinting 6-21-16 Field Memo Alert:* Superior Court upholds decision barring [summer-school tuition](#) but stresses that ruling applies to one case only
2. R.I. [Music Education](#) Association receives national advocacy award
3. Christine Lopes Metcalfe named new RIDE [Chief of Staff](#)

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

Educators:

4. RIDE adds second training for new evaluators; [evaluator-training academy](#) to be offered **September 30 and October 1**
5. RIDE posts second blog on [equitable access](#) to excellent educators

Transportation:

6. [School Bus Monitor](#) Variance requests due **June 30** for summer transportation, **August 19** for the coming school year

From the U.S. Department of Education

7. Secretary King releases letter of ESSA and [stakeholder engagement](#)

8. USED releases guidance on supporting children in [foster care](#)

Action Item Calendar

Today (June 24): [Roster Verification Principal Signoff \(Stage 3\) – Closes](#)

Thursday (June 30) – [Asset Protection](#) Plan due

July 8 – [Evaluation](#) data due

July 15 – [Housing Aid](#) applications due

July 15 – [Physical-restraint](#) data due

August 1 – Fast-Track [Repair Program](#) intent letter

August 19 – School Bus Monitor Variance requests due (see [below](#))

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

- 1. *Reprinting 6-21-16 Field Memo Alert: Superior Court upholds decision barring summer-school tuition but stresses that ruling applies to one case only***

As you may be aware, about three months ago Superior Court Judge William E. Carnes, Jr., issued a decision in *Giannini v Council et al.* Judge Carnes that reversed a decision by the previous Commissioner (which the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education upheld). He found that the Cumberland School Department could not charge Ms. Giannini tuition for summer school for her son.

On Monday (June 20), Judge Carnes denied a motion to reconsider the case. Judge Carnes did agree to modify the portion of the decision that had stated that school committees cannot raise revenue. In that regard, the court will include in its Order this language: “This decision is limited to the question of whether school committees may raise revenue by charging students tuition. This decision does not address whether school committees may raise revenue from other sources.”

Regarding the request to delay implementation of the ruling, Judge Carnes said he was sympathetic to the concerns that this decision may more broadly affect the ability of summer school to proceed. He, however, once again said this decision was about “one appellant” seeking her \$700 fee back and that this is neither a class action nor a declaratory injunction with a request for injunctive relief.

At this point, therefore, we have no definitive answer as to whether you may charge tuition for summer school. If, however, you charge tuition for summer school, you should expect that there may be a legal challenge that references this ruling.

2. R.I. Music Education Association receives national advocacy award

The National Association for Music Education has presented the Rhode Island Music Education Association with the 2016 NAFME Excellence in Advocacy Award. The award recognizes the Rhode Island Music Education Association (RIMEA) for its advocacy on behalf of legislation on the “availability of instruction in musical performance education,” which became Rhode Island General Law 16-22-27. The law requires all secondary public schools in Rhode Island to “offer, as part of the curriculum, courses in musical performing arts.” Congratulations on the award to all members of RIMEA, Robert Rappa, President, and Nicole M. Worzel, Advocacy Chair.

3. Christine Lopes Metcalfe named new RIDE Chief of Staff

We would like to let you know that Christine Lopes Metcalfe will join the RIDE team as Chief of Staff next month, replacing Kim Bright, who will be pursuing a Master's in Public Administration degree at Harvard. We thank Kim for all of her hard work and dedication to Rhode Island education, and we wish her well at Harvard and beyond.

Christine is currently the Executive Director of RI-CAN (the Rhode Island Campaign for Achievement Now), and she brings a wide range of skills and experience to our team. Christine was elected to serve on the student advisory board of the Massachusetts Department of Education as a high-school student, and she has been involved in public education ever since. After earning a Bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and a Master's in Public Administration from Suffolk University, Christine worked as a political consultant for SEIU Local 509; as a legislative aide in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, focusing on the Committee on Education; and as Deputy Chief of Staff to a leader in the House. She later became field director of the "Early Education for All Campaign," at Strategies for Children, in Boston, which worked to provide all children in Massachusetts with high-quality early learning.

Christine spent part of her childhood in Rhode Island and returned again a decade ago to serve as executive director of Common Cause Rhode Island. She later worked on the staff of the Rhode Island Mayoral Academies before joining RI-CAN. All who have worked with Christine know her as fair-minded, team-oriented, and an expert builder of coalitions. She looks forward to engaging with Rhode Island educators, families, and the entire RIDE team in support of great teaching and learning.

From RIDE

Educators:

4. RIDE adds second training for new evaluators; evaluator-training academy to be offered September 30 and October 1

All new evaluators using the Rhode Island Model in the coming school year (2016-17) are required to successfully complete training.

Previously, this training was a four-day training prior to the start of the school year. In order to better reflect best practice, we have changed the format and timing of the training. As part of this new training sequence, participants will engage in pre-work on their own; attend a two-day in-person academy in the summer or fall; receive coaching as needed throughout the year; and then attend a one-day, in-person training in the spring.

The first part of the training sequence, the two-day academy, will be held at RIDE (80 Washington St./255 Westminster St., Providence), in Room 444, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., on **September 30 and October 1**. The academy will prepare personnel evaluating teachers and support professionals to accurately observe and rate practice, lead professional feedback conversations, approve student learning or outcome objectives, and use the Educator Performance and Support System. Attendance is required on both days, and about an hour of pre-work is required prior to the academy. Lunch will be provided both days. Register on Eventbrite, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/RIM-Fall>

or

<http://ridefall.eventbrite.com>

5. RIDE posts second blog on equitable access to excellent educators

We are excited to bring you our second blog post on Equitable Access. This entry, written by RIDE Education Specialist Lauren Matlach, explores the importance of student and teacher attendance. You can read her blog post as well as the Rhode Island Equity Plan on the Equitable Access page of our website:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EquitableAccess.aspx>

Transportation:

6. School Bus Monitor Variance requests due June 30 for summer transportation, August 19 for the coming school year

If you are planning to use one of the approved School Bus Monitor Variances for the coming school year (2016-17), it is time to submit your requests through the eRIDE system. Please submit requests by **June 30** for any July through August K-5 transportation. Requests for September through June of the 2016-17 school year should be submitted by **August 19**. If you have any questions regarding access to the variance module through eRIDE or the allowable variances, please contact Cindy Brown, at 222-4257 or Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov.

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

7. Secretary King releases letter of ESSA and stakeholder engagement

Education Secretary John B. King, Jr., has issued a letter regarding the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act and stakeholder engagement. The letter reads in part:

Thank you for the work you are doing to transition to the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which President Obama signed into law on December 10, 2015, and which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The reauthorized law replaces the one-size-fits-all approach of its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; creates a new Federal-State partnership that provides greater flexibility for States and districts; and supports educational equity for all children to help prepare them for college and careers. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your team to realize the goal of the new law: to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality, well-rounded education.

The purpose of this letter is to highlight the importance and utility of stakeholder engagement as States and local school districts transition to and, eventually, implement the ESSA, and to provide guidance, resources, and examples of stakeholder engagement for States and districts to consider. Many of you are already beginning your work with this in mind, and I appreciate that you are approaching planning and implementation in the spirit of true collaboration – ensuring diverse stakeholders are at the table from the start. As you know, meaningful and ongoing stakeholder engagement helps ensure that stakeholders are able to provide feedback and inform continuous enhancement of State and local strategies to improve student outcomes and meet State-established performance goals. It also produces valuable information that will help States and districts design the best possible education systems for students, and increases public buy-in throughout the stages of implementation.

You can read the complete text of the letter here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/160622.html>.

8. USED releases guidance on supporting children in foster care

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have released guidance to states, school districts, and child welfare agencies on the new provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for supporting children in foster care. The guidance aims to assist state and local partners in understanding and implementing the new law and to inform state and local collaboration between educational and child welfare agencies across the nation for the well-being of children in foster care. The guidance is the first the USED is releasing regarding provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act, in the coming weeks and months to help states, districts, and schools as they implement the new law.

The guidance in its entirety can be found [here](#).

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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