

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, August 12, 2016

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. [Career-technical education](#) provides opportunities for all students
2. School leaders urged to encourage participation in [free PSAT](#) opportunity; new deadline for ordering test books, **September 23**
3. RIDE announces next steps toward formation of [Empowerment Schools](#)

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

Public Hearings:

4. *Reminder:* RIDE accepting comment through **September 15** on [Secondary School Regulations](#); 4 hearings scheduled
5. Council seeks public comment on proposed regulations on [educator certification](#); hearing scheduled for **September 15**

Assessments:

6. RIDE updates timetable release of [PARCC 2016 results](#)

Finance and Grants:

7. [RITEAF forms](#) due **September 16**; LEAs asked to update technology plans – ***Action Item***
8. RIDE to award grants to LEAs for [homeless](#) education programs

Legal:

9. Schools reminded about procedures for determining student [residency](#)

Educators:

10. Educators encouraged to contribute to [LLS fundraiser](#) in honor of Thompson School Principal Jaime Crowley
11. School leaders reminded of [evaluation](#) cycles, procedures for new hires

Instruction:

12. RIDE schedules workshop on project-based, [personalized learning](#)

Data Collection:

13. [School Profile](#) module open for review; August deadlines announced

From the U.S. Department of Education

14. Toolkit available on supporting, engaging [newcomer students](#), families
15. Report released on education trends for [racial, ethnic groups](#)

From other organizations

16. Verizon [App Challenge](#) seeking entries from students through **November 18**
17. Institute for Learning offers one-day institutes on teaching [mathematics](#)

Report issued on building [world-class education](#) systems

18. Entries being accepted for [Innovate to Educate](#) Awards

Action Item Calendar

- August 19 – [School Bus Monitor Variance](#) requests due
- August 19: [Enrollment Census Grade Configuration - Sign Off](#)
- September 9 – [School Building Authority](#) applications
- September 16 - RITEAF forms due (see [below](#))
- September 23 – *New* deadline for PSAT test orders (see [below](#))
- September 30 – [Personnel](#) data due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. **Career-technical education provides opportunities for all students**

As you may be aware, the Chariho Regional School District has brought suit against the State of Rhode Island (through the Council on

Elementary and Secondary Education, RIDE, the Department of Administration, and the Commissioner) regarding authorization to operate and funding for career-technical education (CTE) programs in the Narragansett and Westerly schools. Chariho alleges that it has a perpetual right to non-competition from any other CTE program in the South County region while it operates the Chariho Career and Technical Center. If Chariho prevails in its action, it would be to the detriment of students and taxpayers in Narragansett, Westerly, and possibly other communities that would no longer be able to operate their own CTE programs.

In particular, the Westerly program that will open this fall will offer students in Westerly and other neighboring communities, at no cost, an amazing opportunity to earn a high-school diploma, an associate's degree from CCRI, and a first-in-line job opportunity in advanced manufacturing at Electric Boat.

We remain committed to providing students in all communities with access to programs that will prepare them for college and high-demand, high-wage careers in Rhode Island growth industries. This commitment is good for students and families, good for local communities, and good for the Rhode Island economy.

Click [here](#) for the text of the Chariho complaint.

2. School leaders urged to encourage 10th-grade student participation in PSATs; new deadline for ordering, September 23

As you prepare your grade-10 students to take advantage of the opportunity to take the PSAT test for free in October, please note that College Board has reported to us that “students in the class of 2015 who took the PSAT/NMSQT before taking the SAT *had a higher*

combined score of 134 points, on average, than students who did not take the PSAT/NMSQT.”

Please see this message from the College Board:

On October 19, districts across Rhode Island can administer the PSAT/NMSQT® to their 10th-grade students during the school day, at no cost. Like the SAT®, which will be administered to all Rhode Island 11th-graders in the spring of 2017, the PSAT/NMSQT focuses on what students are already learning in classrooms across the state and measures the skills and knowledge that current research shows are essential for success in college and career.

Taking the PSAT/NMSQT provides students with a great opportunity to practice for and preview the SAT. The test also provides more information than ever before about students' academic strength and areas to target for improvement. Educators can use the results to inform their instructional planning and accelerate students who are either ahead or behind.

Through the College Board partnership with Khan Academy®, students preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT or SAT can take advantage of free, interactive practice tools at satpractice.org. By setting up and linking their College Board and Khan Academy accounts, students receive personalized practice recommendations based on their own test results.

Taking the PSAT/NMSQT also links students to other benefits, including access to advanced coursework and millions of dollars in scholarships.

Schools and districts should place PSAT/NMSQT orders on the College Board's ordering website: collegeboard.org/school. The easy-to-use tool walks users through a streamlined ordering process and provides up-to-date statuses for all orders on a single dashboard.

Updated deadline: Please [submit your orders](#) for PSAT test booklets by **September 23**.

If you have any questions about the PSAT or SAT administration, please send them to Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov).

3. **RIDE announces next steps toward formation of Empowerment Schools**

The 2016 General Assembly enacted the [School and Family Empowerment Act](#), rooted in the belief that if we are going to help all of our children reach their full potential, it will be because we empower the educators closest to students. The Empowerment Act provides educators and community leaders the voluntary opportunity to reimagine and implement their vision for an excellent school by taking advantage of unprecedented levels of school-based autonomy and regulatory flexibility.

Later this fall, RIDE will release detailed information on the process and next steps regarding how districts and educators can volunteer to have their schools become empowerment schools.

Interested in leading an empowerment school? Have a vision for an empowerment school that will provide an excellent, innovative education to Rhode Island students? Please let us know through the following [link](http://tinyurl.com/riempowermentschools) (<http://tinyurl.com/riempowermentschools>). We will

follow up with you shortly to learn more about your vision and to share opportunities to participate in communities of practice with like-minded leaders. In addition, later this fall we will release information about opportunities for interested educators to both participate in leadership-development experiences and connect with like-minded innovative educators interested in developing and leading an empowerment school.

From RIDE

Public Hearings:

4. ***Reminder: RIDE accepting comment through September 15 on Secondary School Regulations; 4 hearings scheduled***

The current draft of Secondary School Regulations, which the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education gave preliminary approval to on May 17, are now undergoing the formal process for recording public comment. Public comment will be open through **September 15**. All interested parties are invited to participate in the public hearings and submit written comments concerning the proposed regulations from through September 15.

You can find draft Secondary School Regulations and other supporting documents can be found at:

<http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DESE/Board%20of%20Education%20Secondary%20Regulations%20-%20Public%20Notice.pdf>

We have schedule public hearings on the proposed regulations:

- Monday, August 22, at 5:30 p.m., at the Cumberland Public Library, Rooms 1 & 2, Hayden Center, 1464 Diamond Hill Road
- Monday, August 29, at 5:30 p.m., at the Newport Public Library, Program Room, Lower Level, 300 Spring Street
- Tuesday, September 6, at 5:30 p.m., at the Warwick Public Library, Room 101, Large Meeting Room, 600 Sandy Lane
- Monday, September 12, at 5:30 p.m., at the University of Rhode Island, Providence Campus, Room 501;, 80 Washington Street/255 Westminster Street

The hearing locations are accessible to those with disabilities, and interpreter services for those with hearing impairment will be provided if requested 48 hours before the hearing. Requests for this service can be made in writing or by calling Sonya Barbosa, at 222- 8463 or RI Relay (800) 745-5555.

Written comments may be submitted to Sonya Barbosa, at the R.I. Department of Education, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, R.I. 02903 or at Secondary@ride.ri.gov or by fax, to 222-6178.

5. Council seeks public comment on proposed regulations on educator certification; hearing scheduled for September 15

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education is seeking public comment on [amended regulations](#) intended to provide more flexibility to school districts as well as to eliminate barriers when school districts are seeking qualified teachers for school-district positions. On June 28, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved for public comment for the proposed draft revisions to the Board of Education Regulations governing the certification for educators in Rhode Island.

The proposed changes would:

- eliminate the Substitute Permit and the accompanying yearly fee, which would make the process more feasible for those interested in working in districts as substitute teachers. The revenue lost would be at the expense of the General Fund, not RIDE;
- eliminate the Athletic Coach Permit, which would not lower the standards for coaches being hired by school districts. The Interscholastic League requires that coaches hold valid CPR and First Aid certification and that they complete the Foundations of Coaching and concussion courses. RIDE would require the same process for Athletic Coach Permit eligibility. This change would move the responsibility to the district, ensuring that Athletic Coaches meet the eligibility requirements set by the Interscholastic League, and this change would remove the redundancy of coaches' having to repeat these assurances to RIDE, the Interscholastic League, and the school district; and
- change the Career and Technical Certification, which would move the current one-year preliminary certificate to a six-year preliminary certificate. This change would allow the Career-Technical Education (CTE) experts and CTE professionals to transition into the field of teaching and work toward full certification over a six-year period of time, without coming to RIDE on a yearly basis. This requirement has been a barrier for many who are moving from their technical fields in to the field of education.

The proposed draft regulations are available for public inspection in person at the RIDE, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, you can request a copy by contacting at Angela.Teixeira@ride.ri.gov or 222-8435.

A public hearing on the proposed draft regulations will take place on Thursday, **September 15**, at 5:30 p.m., at the Shepard Building (Room 501), 80 Washington St./255 Westminster St., Providence.

Assessments:

6. **RIDE updates timetable release of PARCC 2016 results**

See this updated timeline of important dates for the release of the 2016 PARCC results:

- Summary files and reports will be posted to PearsonAccess^{next} (PAN) on **Wednesday** (August 17).
- RIDE will conduct PARCC results pre-release meetings for superintendents, school-committee chairs, and principals on the following dates:
 - **August 22**, at RIDE, Room 260, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
 - **August 23**, at RIDE, Room 260, 1 – 3 p.m.

Note: Both meetings will cover the same material. No need to register. Simply show up on the date at the specified time of the meeting you wish to attend.

- Individual student results reports will start shipping to schools on **August 25**.
- RIDE will release PARCC results on the morning of **August 25** (time tbd). The results embargo will officially be lifted at the time of the release, and the public report will be posted on the RIDE website (www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Results), the public reporting

website will go live, and the results will be also accessible via the Instructional Support System at that time.

- Content standards rosters and evidence statements reports will be posted to PAN on **August 26**.
- PARCC results data workshops will take place on September 21, 23, 27, and 29. Details on times, locations, and registration information will be released in early September.

If you have any questions about this timetable, please send them to parcc@ride.ri.gov.

Finance and Grants:

7. **RITEAF forms due September 16; LEAs asked to update technology plans – *Action Item***

The Rhode Island Telecommunications Educational Access Fund (RITEAF) forms have been updated based on feedback from throughout the year. RIDE needs these forms to apply for E-Rate funding on behalf of the consortium of schools and libraries in Rhode Island receiving RITEAF telecommunications lines. These forms must be returned no later than **September 16** in order for RIDE to file the appropriate E-Rate paperwork on your behalf and for your schools to receive line allocations for the 2017-18 school year.

The updated forms are located at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/SchoolDistrictFinancialData/RITEAFE-RateProgram.aspx>

Please be sure to mail your original, signed documents. Please do not use outdated forms. Look for the correct school year: 2017-18.

Frequently asked questions can be found on the RIDE website as well as on the forms and accompanying paperwork. Technology directors and those responsible for E-Rate paperwork should be made aware of the updates and due dates. Questions about the RITEAF forms can be directed to Karen Cooper, at karen.cooper@ride.ri.gov.

Also, please log onto eRIDE and update the URL that points to your LEA technology plan. Technology plans are used by many RIDE staff members and must be kept current.

RIDE will cross-check technology plans with bandwidth-upgrade requests. If a bandwidth request is made, justification must be included for the request.

8. RIDE to award grants to LEAs for homeless education programs

The purpose of 2016-17 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit applications from LEAs for the development and implementation, or continuation, of programs to provide supplementary educational and related services to homeless children and youth.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act authorizes RIDE to award grants to promote the identification, enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school.

All Rhode Island LEAs with homeless students enrolled in their LEA are eligible to apply. This program is 100 percent federally funded. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The amount of individual grants

awarded will be contingent upon the need of the LEA for assistance and the quality of the application submitted.

RIDE will award McKinney-Vento sub-grants on a competitive basis, using the following criteria:

- the number of children and youth experiencing homelessness (a priority criterion);
- educational needs and support-service needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness;
- quality of the proposed program, including how the proposed use of funds will facilitate identification, enrollment, retention, and educational success of children and youth experiencing homelessness; and
- extent to which the program coordinates with local services providers and area family homeless shelters.

The 2016-17 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant Program RFP was sent directly to all LEA homeless liaisons on August 12 and is available on our website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/EducationPrograms/HomelessStudents.aspx>.

RIDE anticipates funding 3 to 5 grants, with maximum awards of \$50,000. Applications will be due at RIDE on **September 2**. Programs approved for funding will begin on October 1.

Legal:

9. **Schools reminded about procedures for determining student residency**

Please see [this message](#) from Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel David V. Abbott regarding the procedures for determining student residency.

Educators:

10. Educators encouraged to contribute to LLS fundraiser in honor of Thompson School Principal Jaime Crowley

Please see this message from Cumberland High School Principal Alan Tenreiro:

By the time you finish reading this letter, at least one American will have been diagnosed with blood cancer. It seems that no one can escape being touched by cancer in some way. The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is dedicated to curing blood cancers, and they are getting results. The advancements LLS has made in immunotherapy has led to breakthroughs in brain, colon and breast cancer.

I am honored to announce that I am volunteering for this year's Light the Night walk Executive Leadership Committee. While Cumberland High School participates in the Light the Night walk each year, this year's walk is particularly meaningful because our school is raising funds in honor of Rhode Island's 2015 Middle School Principal of the Year, *Jaime Crowley*, of Thompson Middle School, in Newport, and in honor of a student in our Class of 2019.

I truly value the partnership that we have as school principals, administration, and staff and hope that you will help us in our fundraising goal of \$50,000 in honor of Principal *Crowley*.

I am asking you and your school to contribute \$250 to help us reach our commitment. I hope you and your school will join me in stepping up to the challenge. Please consider contributing to LLS's efforts. Your tax-deductible contribution (Tax ID #: 13-5644916) will greatly enhance these collective efforts and can be made out to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Please mail your check to: Alan Tenreiro, Cumberland High School, 2600 Mendon Rd., Cumberland, R.I. 02864 by **October 14**.

I would also encourage your school to consider mobilizing your administration, staff, and students to walk in the 2016 Rhode Island Light the Night Walk on Sunday, October 23, at the Rhode Island State House. It will be a fun and rewarding experience for your school and an opportunity to help in the fight against cancer. You can register to walk as an individual or team here:

<https://registration.lightthenight.org/>

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at 658-2600 or alan.tenreiro@cumberlandschools.org. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your financial commitment that will enable us to accelerate cures for cancer.

11. School leaders reminded of evaluation cycles, procedures for new hires

As the new school year is about to get underway, RIDE would like to remind you of the following important steps to ensure a smooth start:

- New hires should be given RIDEmap roles and added to EPSS. Please note that there is a 24-hour delay for RIDEmap roles to take effect. Submit a help-desk ticket in the event that the educator does not show up after 24 hours.

- Remove RIDEmap roles from educators who have left your LEA.
- In EPSS, DCAs should delete evaluations for these educators by clicking on the red “minus” button (in User Management).

As you may be aware, legislation from June 2014 (H 7096 Sub B) created RIGL § 16-12-11, which codified language on the frequency with which LEAs can evaluate educators. In September 2015, RIDE issued new guidance to support LEA efforts to most effectively manage the evaluation process for teachers. This guidance stated that all tenured teachers (with the exception of those in their first year teaching under a new teaching certificate) who earned final evaluation ratings of Effective in the 2013-14 school year must be fully evaluated again by the end of the 2016-17 school year. Similarly, all tenured teachers (again, excepting those in their first year teaching under a new teaching certificate) who received final evaluation ratings of Highly Effective in the 2013-14 school year must be fully evaluated again by the end of the 2017-18 school year.

Please note that nothing in this guidance is intended to override any provision in the statute on educator evaluations (RIGL 16-12-11), including the provision that LEAs may conduct annual or more frequent evaluations of a tenured teacher under certain circumstances. These circumstances include (but are not limited to) any teacher’s requesting an annual evaluation, a provision for more frequent evaluations included in a negotiated collective bargaining agreement, and concerns that may arise about a teacher’s performance (which must be handled in accordance with local personnel policies and with the negotiated collective bargaining agreement).

How this applies to support professionals and building administrators:

Support professionals may enter the cyclical process based on their 2014-15 evaluation rating. Therefore, tenured support professionals

who earned a rating of Effective in 2014-15 must be evaluated no later than 2016-17, and support professionals who earned a rating of Highly Effective in 2014-15 must be evaluated no later than 2017-18. All non-tenured support professionals, support professionals using a new certificate, and support professionals earning ratings of Ineffective or Developing must continue to be evaluated annually.

Building administrators are not included in H 7096 Sub B and must continue to receive annual evaluations.

If you should have any questions regarding the cyclical process, please do not hesitate to contact carrie.appel@ride.ri.gov or carolina.castro@ride.ri.gov.

For EPSS questions, please reach out via the RIDEmap Help Desk: <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

Instruction:

12. RIDE schedules workshop on project-based, personalized learning

In collaboration with Apple Education, we are pleased to announce a workshop for educator teams to actively learn about project-based, personalized learning strategies. Participant teams will conduct a collaborative, challenge-based learning activity that involves the engineering design process to find potential solutions to a local Rhode Island problem. This is a multi-disciplinary activity, aligned to Common Core Mathematics, Common Core English Language Arts, Next Generation Science Standards, and the Rhode Island Grade Span Expectations for Social Studies. All levels are encouraged to attend.

The workshop will occur on Thursday, **September 13**, from 8 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative. Registration is free! Participants are encouraged to sign up in teams of 3 or 4.

To register and for additional information, please follow this link: [Personalization in the Science Classroom](#).

If you have questions or for further details about the workshop, please email Kate Schulz, at kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov.

Data Collection:

13. School Profile module open for review; August deadlines announced

The [School Profile](#) module is opened for review and modification. Please review and make changes as necessary. 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 feature.

The following are upcoming data-collection deadlines:

- **Tuesday** (August 16): [2016-2017 Enrollment Opens](#).
- August 19: [Enrollment Census Grade Configuration - Sign Off](#)

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

14. Toolkit available on supporting, engaging newcomer students, families

The Office of English Language Acquisition has released the [Newcomer Toolkit](#), which provides a discussion of topics relevant to

understanding, supporting, and engaging newcomer students as well as their families; tools, strategies, and examples of classroom and schoolwide practices, along with professional learning activities for use in staff meetings or professional learning communities; and selected resources for information and assistance, most of which are available online at no cost.

Report released on education trends for racial, ethnic groups

The National Center for Education Statistics has released the report “Status and Trends in the Education of [Racial and Ethnic Groups](#) 2016.” This report profiles current conditions and recent trends in the education of students by racial and ethnic group. It presents a selection of indicators that examine differences in educational participation and attainment of students in the racial or ethnic groups of White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Two or More Races. The report summarizes data on topics such as demographics; preprimary, elementary, and secondary participation; student achievement; and student behaviors and persistence in education, postsecondary education, and outcomes of education.

From other organizations

15. Verizon App Challenge seeking entries from students through November 18

The [Verizon Innovative Learning App Challenge](#) – the no-coding-skills-needed contest that gives middle- and high-school students a chance to bring their problem-solving app ideas to life – is now accepting new app ideas for the 2016-17 competition. The fifth annual challenge invites students across the U.S. to gather teams, dream up ideas, and create

concepts for mobile apps that could solve problems in their schools and communities.

The app challenge is open to teams representing nonprofit organizations in addition to public, private, and parochial schools, who compete for the ultimate prizes: free tablets for each team member, up to a \$20,000 cash prize to support their school or organization, and the chance to turn their app ideas into real, working smartphone apps that will be made available for download.

Students can submit ideas from now until midnight on **November 18**, and the winners will be named in January and February. For more information on how to enter, and tips for creating the next winning idea, visit www.verizon.com/appchallenge.

Delivered by Verizon Innovative Learning in partnership with the [Technology Student Association](#), the app challenge is a hands-on learning experience that aims to help students envision brighter futures for themselves as business owners, app inventors, coders and technology professionals.

One team of middle-school students and one team of high-school students from every state and D.C. will win \$5,000 for their schools, groups, or clubs, and tablets for every team member as Best in State winners of the app challenge. From these submissions, 24 Best in Region winners will advance to the next phase of the competition, and have a chance to win the Best in Nation distinction. Eight Best in Nation teams will earn an additional \$15,000 for their school or club and a chance to bring their app ideas to life with in-person guidance from experts at MIT.

Additionally, all the Best in State winners will be eligible to be named the Fan Favorite, which will be voted on by the public. The team that

gets the most votes will win the title of Fan Favorite and all the same prizes as the Best in Nation winners. The Best in Nation and Fan Favorite winners will also present their apps in person at the 2017 Technology Student Association National Conference.

16. Institute for Learning offers one-day institutes on teaching mathematics

The Institute for Learning (IFL) is offering two one-day institutes for Improving Teaching and Learning in Mathematics. The goal of professional development is to affect classroom practice. In order to ensure transference, it is recommended that teachers first engage as learners to deepen both content and pedagogical knowledge. Then the professional development moves into the classroom, with the teachers observing IFL fellows and their own in-district colleagues as they facilitate lessons. Participants will experience a cycle for planning, teaching, and reflecting; identify the benefits of collaborative preparation; use the tools learned about in PD sessions; and build a philosophy on high-level mathematics instruction. For more information about these institute, contact Jennifer Sherer, at jensherer@gmail.com .

17. Report issued on building world-class education systems

The National Conference of State Legislators has issued a report, “No Time to Lose: How to build a [world-class education](#) system state by state.” The report finds that:

Common elements are present in nearly every world-class education system, including a strong early education system, a reimagined and professionalized teacher workforce, robust career and technical education programs, and a comprehensive, aligned system of education. These elements are not found in the U.S. in a

consistent, well-designed manner as they are found in high performers.

18. **Entries being accepted for Innovate to Educate Awards**

We're very excited about the new [Innovate to Educate Awards](#) program sponsored by Xirrus, and we want encourage you to submit your official entry as soon as possible so we can showcase and share the best examples of ed-tech innovation from across the country that are improving teaching and learning through the use of technology.

To make an official entry, you'll need to complete and submit the [entry form](#) along with either a short video (90 seconds or less) or a picture that illustrates your technology initiative. Once your submission is complete, we'll post your entry on **the** Innovate to Educate Awards website and share the link on the eSchool News Facebook page to put your school in the spotlight. A panel of three industry experts will judge the entries at the end of the program to choose the Grand Prize winner, plus two Community Choice winners will be chosen through online voting via Facebook.

For more details, visit the [FAQs](#) page.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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