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Friday, October 21, 2016

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Action Item Calendar

Today (extended deadline, October 21): [Dyslexia](#) survey due
Monday (October 24): [Facilities](#)-assessment surveys due
Tuesday (October 25): [October 1 Data Snapshot, Demographics and duplicates NEED to be zero - Due](#)
Tuesday (October 25): EL census updates due (see [below](#))
October 28: [October 1 Enrollment Census Submission & Snapshot Reports - Due](#)
October 30: EL categorical funding plans due (see [below](#))
October 31: EL performance reports due (see [below](#))
December 9 – [Textbook](#)-verification forms due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. PSAT test administration proceeded smoothly across Rhode Island high schools

From all reports we have received, the administration of the PSAT test to 10th-graders on Wednesday proceeded smoothly across all of our high schools. We're really pleased the Rhode Island schools ordered text booklets for more than 90 percent of our 10th graders. We will have information on statewide participation following the administration of make-up tests on November 2 for schools and students who had special circumstances.

We are grateful that Governor Raimondo, with support from the General Assembly, was able to secure funding to enable all 10th graders to take the PSAT this fall and for all 11th graders to take the SAT in the spring, at no cost to them or their families and during the school day. This experience will encourage more students to think seriously about preparing for college and continuing their education beyond high school. Increasing the number of college-bound students will help us meet Governor Raimondo's long-term goal: 70 percent of Rhode Islanders holding a college degree by 2025.

2. Paul Cuffee School 4th-grade teacher wins Milken Educator Award

On Tuesday, the Milken Family Foundation presented a 2016-17 Milken Educator Award to Emily Caldarelli, a 4th-grade teacher at Paul Cuffee Lower School. The award, which includes a \$25,000 grant, recognizes Emily for her "project-based approach to learning and her leadership in supporting high-quality professional development opportunities for her colleagues." She is the only Milken Educator Award recipient in Rhode Island for this school year.

Emily represents what's best about the thousands of teachers in Rhode Island public schools. She has led professional development at Paul Cuffee School on social and emotional learning, she has brought a science curriculum to the school that links Cuffee with educators at the University of Rhode Island, and she keeps in touch with Cuffee parents throughout the year through letters, postcards, phone calls, and email.

We are honored that she has received a Milken Educator Award, and we congratulate Emily on this accomplishment.

3. San Antonio Superintendent reviews data, shows poverty is not destiny

I encourage you to read this [article](#) on the Real Clear Education website about the work Pedro Martinez, the superintendent in San Antonio, has done to transform education in his community. Some of the highlights are:

He knew poverty didn't have to be destiny. And he knew his toughest challenge would be convincing others of this. To start that conversation, he needed data.

Over the summer, Martinez created a map depicting the level of poverty at each of the district's 99 schools. Using block-by-block earnings data corresponding to every student's address, he calculated the median family income for each school building.

The map revealed surprises—some of the poorest schools outperformed more comfortable ones—as well as differing needs.

There are, of course, communities throughout the country where schools that are beating the odds with impoverished students

[His work] sparked discussion—and political resistance—about what's possible. But in greater San Antonio's 17 school districts, it

is still generally accepted that poverty is an insurmountable barrier to school success.

Martinez hasn't put the data on the district website or published it. But he has begun carrying the green-and-white map, printed on an oversized piece of paper, around with him.

"At a micro level, let's use this to change the conversation," Martinez said. "At a macro level we have the opportunity to change the conversation with the community."

"This is data at the school level we can share with our partners," he said. "If you don't understand and you're not adjusting your supports around it, you're not going to have success."

New research confirms much of what Martinez is finding – that not all "poverty" is the same. In July, Katherine Michelmore and Susan Dynarski, professors at Syracuse University and the University of Michigan, respectively, issued "[The Gap Within the Gap](#)," a working paper that proposes a method for identifying the most disadvantaged students. Using data on all Michigan students, the researchers first identified those who ever received subsidized meals and then sorted out those who were eligible year after year [transitory vs persistent poverty].

"It's not that they don't love them," [Patti] Radle [San Antonio School Board chair] said. "It's unconscious. It's a sense that maybe

they're struggling with so much. We have to help teachers get past that and give them license to expect more.

"They'll say, 'I love these kids and I love this school,' " she adds. "So one of the things I say is, 'So then let's find a way to love them to excellence.' "

4. LEAs asked to contact families, request completion of meals-benefits applications as soon as possible

As you may be aware, at the start of every school year we work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to match our student data with DHS data regarding students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). Students who were eligible for FRL in the previous school year maintain their eligibility for the first 30 days of school.

We have requested from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) an extension of the 30-day grace period, and the USDA has obliged: Students will retain their FRL eligibility for an additional 15 days (a total of 45 school days).

We therefore request that you notify families that may be eligible for FRL benefits to submit application materials as quickly as possible. As a reminder, eligible families can apply for meals benefits with just a case number and signature or with a notification of eligibility for SNAP.

We also request that you ask your IT offices to generate eligibility lists and integrate newly identified eligible students as quickly as possible. Finally, we ask you to be sensitive to any situation that arises in which a

student's FRL eligibility has unexpectedly lapsed and that you not deprive any such student of meal services until you and the student's family resolve the matter and complete the benefits-application process.

If you have any questions on this matter, please email Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov.

From RIDE

ESSA:

5. RIDE schedules 5 community forums on Every Student Succeeds Act

As we prepare to transition to the new federal law – the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – RIDE will hold community forums next month to collect public feedback and input about how we can fulfill our vision for every student. Students, parents, teachers, community members, and community leaders across the state: You are invited to share experiences to help inform the ESSA implementation plan for Rhode Island.

We will hold five forums at locations across Rhode Island:

- *Providence Area: Wednesday, **November 2**, at Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex, 182 Thurbers Ave., Providence (Spanish language interpretation services are available.)*

- *Northern Rhode Island*: Wednesday, **November 9**, at Lincoln Middle School, 152 Jenckes Hill Rd.
- *West Bay*: Monday, **November 14**, at Coventry High School, 40 Reservoir Rd.
- *East Bay*: Thursday, **November 17**, at Portsmouth High School, 120 Education Lane
- *Southern Rhode Island*: Monday, **November 21** at South Kingstown High School, 215 Columbia St., Wakefield

All forums will take place from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

These forums will be open to everyone. All are welcome, but to reserve a spot at any of the forums you can use this link:

www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA-Forum

Come lend your voice to advance Rhode Island schools!

Printable and shareable flyers about these forums can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA. For more information about these community forums, please contact Felicia.Brown@ride.ri.gov or 222-8182.

Instruction:

6. Second meeting scheduled for public feedback on personalized learning

Along with the Office of Innovation, the Highlander Institute, the Rhode Island Mayoral Academies, the Rhode Island Association of School Principals, and others, RIDE has helped to produce a draft [white paper](#)

defining personalized learning and discussing its possibilities in Rhode Island and areas of potential focus to get us closer to a more personalized, student-centered approach to learning.

The Office of Innovation, in collaboration with the other white paper co-signers, held a meeting last week and will hold a second meeting next month to update stakeholders on the contents of the draft and to solicit feedback on the draft from the broader Rhode Island community. We encourage you to attend, and please help us spread the word!

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, **November 15**, from 4:30-6 p.m., at the East Providence City Hall (room 306), 145 Taunton Ave. ([RSVP here](#))

7. Applications for MSP grant for elementary-science coaching due November 4

Applications for the Mathematics and Science Partnerships grant, Enhancing Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skills of K-5 Educators in the Next Generation Science Standards, are due at 4 p.m. on **November 4**. An informational PowerPoint is available on the RIDE website, and it contains additional clarifications regarding the requirements for the range of grade-level participants and schools within an LEA, local vs. out-of-state institutes of postsecondary education, and the requirement for high-needs status. Click on this link to the RIDE website to access the MSP Grant documents and 2017 MSP Grant Informational PowerPoint:

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

Schools:

8. RIDE posts complete list of 2016 school classifications

Two weeks ago, RIDE released the 2016 school classifications. Aside from Commended, Focus, and Priority Schools, no other Rhode Island schools receive classifications, although 50 schools received an “alert” because of either low participation rates on PARCC assessments or low graduation rates. Click here for a link to the complete list of school [classifications](#).

As noted in last week’s memo, as we continue our transition to PARCC assessments and to the Every Student Succeeds Act, we will have more and better information regarding student progress, closing achievement gaps, and school improvement. We are in the process of developing a new system for school classifications that will employ additional measures beyond state assessments. Improving outcomes for students is a responsibility we all share, and we encourage our school communities to review available data on student progress in order to support good teaching and learning.

Assessments:

9. RIDE issues reminders on student records, score reports for alternate assessments

Reminder: RIAA Science Student Registration. Students who are eligible for the alternate assessment in grades 4, 8, and 11 must be registered by teachers for the RIAA Science alternate assessment. The first

collection period window will close on **November 11**. For more information on the RIAA Science Assessment, please visit www.ride.ri.gov/RIAA for the test administration manual and annotated training presentations.

Reminder: Alternate Assessment Student Registration and Data. In an effort to streamline this year's student registration experience for the Multi-state Alternate Assessment, please make sure that your special education directors and data managers update student records in *two* places: 1) the eRIDE Enrollment File and the 2) Special Education Census. Please make sure that the student grade level in both databases is accurate and that the student's record in the enrollment file is active. RIDE uses both databases to construct a student-registration file, and any discrepancies in the data may result in test-administration irregularities.

RIAA Binders: All RIAA binders from last year should be in the hands of teachers; they were shipped to you last month. If you are missing a binder or cannot find the binders, please contact your special education director. You may email Sarah Greene, at greene.sarah@measuredprogress.org, if you cannot find your binders.

Alternate Assessment Score Reports: Two paper copies of MSAA and RIAA Science student score reports, along with parent letters, were mailed to you last month. *One copy is to be sent home to parents and the other to be included in the student's school record.* For score-report interpretation guides go to www.ride.ri.gov/RIAA and click on the "Results" tab.

English Learners:

**10. EL census updates for ACCESS test ordering due Tuesday –
*Action Item***

Please make sure the English Learner (EL) census on eRIDE is updated and accurate for all ELs in your LEA by **Tuesday** (October 25). The data entered at that point will be used to order ACCESS tests for active ELs in your LEA. Any ELs entered into the census or enrolled in your LEA after that point will need tests ordered by the Test Coordinator for your LEA in the WIDA AMS system.

**11. *Reminder* : EL categorical funding plans, assurances due
October 30 – *Action Item***

As stated in the email that went out to all heads of LEAs on September 19, the deadline for submitting your plan (for LEAs receiving \$10,000 or more) or written assurance (for LEAs receiving less than \$10,000) for your categorical English Learner funding is **October 30**. Included in that same email were the instructions and budget form for submitting your plan or Written Assurance.

Completed plans and signed Written Assurances may be submitted electronically to Karen Lovett, at Karen.Lovett@ride.ri.gov. RIDE is excited about this opportunity to expand services for English learners. RIDE staff members will collect success stories about how these funds have assisted you in serving the expanding population of English learners in Rhode Island with creative and innovative approaches.

**12. EL and Title III Performance Reports due October 31 –
*Action Item***

The English Learner (EL) and Title III Performance Reports are due on Monday, **October 31**, in AcceleGrants. These Performance Reports are to be completed whether or not your LEA receives Title III funding. EL administrators as well as superintendents for each district will need to approve the Performance Report before it can be submitted to RIDE, and nonpublic-school consultation forms will need to be uploaded into the reports by this date.

Business and Finance:

13. RIDE adopts new methodology for projecting, adjusted billing for LEA costs for statewide transportation

Since the inception of the statewide transportation program, one of the concerns raised most often has been the unpredictable nature of the costs, along with the monthly peaks and valleys to the invoicing. Your concerns were heard, and we have worked for some time to develop and test a new methodology that would be simple, predictable, equitable, and clear. The new methodology we have adopted incorporates a projection for school-year costs, reconciliation and recalculation of costs at the end of November and March, and a final end-of-year adjustment in July, much like the current adjusted June billing.

September invoices are expected to be released next week and will include your projections for the current fiscal year (2017) school-year costs, along with additional information about the new methodology.

In the future, we expect to release projected costs prior to the opening of school. If you have any questions about this new methodology, please contact Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov or by phone at 222-4257.

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

14. USED issues guidance on ESSA and early learning

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) released this week non-regulatory guidance to help ensure young children from birth through third grade get the strong start they need to achieve success in school and in life. This is the USED's first comprehensive look at how the nation's new education law supports our youngest learners.

President Obama signed the bipartisan [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) into law in December to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and replace key requirements of the outdated No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. For the first time, the ESSA includes provisions to promote coordination in early learning among local communities, align preschool with early elementary school, and build the capacity of teachers, leaders and others serving young children to provide the highest-quality early learning opportunities. Early learning is woven throughout the ESSA, as a means of addressing educational equity, supporting students' school success, and bringing greater alignment along the entire education continuum. The ESSA, also for the first time, authorizes Preschool Development Grants, building upon the existing Preschool Development Grant program, which has

supported 18 states, to ensure more students across the country have access to high-quality preschool.

This guidance is intended to remind state and local decision-makers about the importance of investing in early learning, highlight the opportunities available under the new law to strengthen early education, and provide examples of how states and local communities can support young children's success in school. The guidance is available [here](#).

15. USED issues policy brief on early learning, technology

This morning, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services issued a [policy brief on early learning and the use of technology](#) to help families and early educators use technology to promote active, engaged, meaningful, and socially interactive learning. The brief will help those who care for nearly 36 million children from birth to eight-years-old make wise decisions about media use, and the brief presents four guiding principles on the use of technology with young children. It also includes a call to action for researchers, media, and application developers, underscoring topics for further research and encouraging the development of research-based products.

16. Schools encouraged to invite veterans into classrooms for teaching about Veterans Day

Schools are encouraged to invite U.S. military veterans into their classrooms around [Veterans Day](#) (November 11). Veterans can share their experiences and teach students lessons about the history and significance of the federal holiday, helping students reflect upon the importance of the ideals of liberty, freedom, and democracy.

17. USED issues guidance on providing a well-rounded education including a variety of disciplines

The U.S. Department of Education today released non-regulatory guidance to help states, districts, and schools provide students with a more well-rounded education under Title IV, Part A, *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAE)*. The new grant program in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) focuses on safe and healthy students and how technology can be integrated into schools to improve teaching and learning in addition to emphasizing access to a well-rounded education that includes a wide variety of disciplines – such as music, the arts, social studies, environmental education, computer science, and civics.

Through this guidance, the USED provides resources, tools, and examples of innovative strategies to support the effective implementation of the SSAE grant program. Areas of focus include:

- strategies to leverage federal, state, and local funds as well as develop partnerships to maximize the impact of the programs and services;
- steps to guide districts in examining their needs and investing in areas that will have the greatest impact on their communities;
- tactics to improve school conditions for student learning so students are healthy and feel safe and supported;
- effective practices to carefully design and thoughtfully apply technology to accelerate, amplify, and support student learning; and

- approaches to engage students in educational opportunities across multiple subjects and domains.

The guidance highlights that SSAE funds may not be sufficient to independently fund many of these innovative activities. This guidance discusses leveraging other state and local resources in combination with the SSAE grant funds to achieve the goals of SSAE programs and activities. For the full guidance released today, [click here](#).

From other state agencies

18. Postsecondary Office launches initiative to promote completion of FAFSA college-aid applications

It's FAFSA time! Nationally, 85 percent of students are eligible for federal financial aid for college, but only 45 percent of high-school seniors complete the FAFSA before high-school graduation. The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RIOPC) is leading a [state-wide initiative](#) to promote FAFSA completion and access to financial aid for college, and we are inviting high schools and districts across Rhode Island to participate. As part of the U.S. Department of Education's [FAFSA Completion Initiative](#), state student grant agencies, including RIOPC, may provide participating secondary schools, school districts, and certain designated entities with limited data about students' progress in completing and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which most colleges and universities require for financial aid. Since the initiative began in 2014, our office has worked with schools and districts to help more than 1,900 additional students

complete their FAFSAs. There is no cost associated with participating in this program.

If you are interested in partnering with RIOPC in the FAFSA Completion Initiative or have any questions about the initiative, you can contact Michael Joyce, Director of Grants and Scholarships, Division of Higher Education Assistance (michael.joyce@riopc.edu, 736-1172).

From other organizations

19. RIMLE to hold blended-learning event on Thursday

The Rhode Island Middle Level Educators (RIMLE) invites middle-level educators and pre-service teachers to participate in a Blended Learning Event, the first in a series of three events focusing on middle level blended-learning best practices. On **Thursday** (October 27), Bill Black and his team from West Broadway Middle School, in Providence, will engage participants to gain an understanding of middle-level blended-learning practices and will facilitate a discussion on how blended learning is being implemented throughout middle-school classrooms in Rhode Island. The event will take place from 4-6 p.m., at the New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich campus (Room S216-218), 1 New England Tech Boulevard. Registration for all RIMLE events is free for RIMLE member schools and institutions. Please email rimle.communications@gmail.com to RSVP.

Visit the [RIMLE](#) website for a listing of upcoming events, information about RIMLE, and more.

20. RI Foundation offers college scholarships, education resources for teachers on Roger Williams and his teachings

The Roger Williams National Memorial was the setting for the Rhode Island Foundation launch Tuesday of the [Roger Williams Initiative](#). Conceived of and funded by philanthropists Letitia and John Carter, the program gives students and teachers access to a wealth of information about Roger Williams and will award generous college scholarships.

The [Roger Williams Scholarship](#) will help Rhode Island students who appreciate the values and legacy of Roger Williams to attain a college education. As many as three students a year will receive up to \$20,000 a year for a maximum of four years based on financial need and academic good standing.

The initiative website includes a free online education hub offering activities and discussion starters on Roger Williams and his teachings for elementary-, middle-, and high-school educators to use in their classrooms, as well as resources on [Roger Williams, the indigenous people, and the environment of Rhode Island](#).

21. Write Rhode Island announces additional short-story workshops

As part of the Write Rhode Island short-story competition partnership with Providence Community Librarie, visit the Wanskuck Library on **Tuesday** (October 25), at 3:30 p.m., for a Write Rhode Island workshop. Call Denise, at 274- 4145.

Barnes & Noble Warwick will host Introduction to Short Story Writing with Max Winter on **Wednesday** (October 27), at 6 p.m. Contact Barnes & Nobles to sign up.

Barrington Public Library will host a special series, Write Rhode Island Short Fiction with Max Winter, n November 3, 10, and 17 at 6:30 p.m. Contact Tanya at 247-1920.

Write Rhode Island is a short fiction competition presented by School One High School and Goat Hill. Students can read the contest rules, download guidelines and a complete list of free writing workshops and a complete list of workshops across Rhode Island including Newport, Cumberland, Johnston, Scituate, and more, by visiting the School One website, www.school-one.org

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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