

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, December 16, 2016**

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**December 30:**

[Early Childhood Special Education Data - Due](#)

**January 12:**

[Reporting Student Contacts - Due](#)

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## Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. **U.S. Secretary of Education King calls for supporters of public education to unite on behalf of children**

I would like to share with you some remarks from Secretary King on the importance of working together to provide all students – particularly those who are the most vulnerable – with the opportunities they need to be successful:

During a speech at the Center for American Progress, King laid out a bold vision for how the country can unite and move forward in ensuring equity and excellence in public education – from preschool through college.

“For all who believe that strong, equitable public education is central to a healthy democracy and a thriving economy, now is the moment for us to set aside the policy differences that we have let divide us, and move forward together courageously to defend and extend this fundamental American institution,” King said.

During his speech, King highlighted passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law by President Obama a year ago, as an opportunity to move the nation forward together. And he called on those who have been on either side of debates over issues including testing, accountability, charter schools, and effective teaching to come together around shared values.

“Today we have a choice to make. We can continue to argue amongst ourselves about our disagreements. Or we can work together in pursuit of larger goals,” King said. “Now, I am not saying that we have to agree on every tactic or strategy. We

won't. But I am saying that we can reject false dichotomies and disparaging rhetoric. We can stop questioning our natural allies' intentions and fight side by side for the belief that every student in America has the right to a great public education."

The nation has seen encouraging progress over the last eight years.

- The high school graduation rate is at an all-time high of 83 percent;
- Dropout rates are down, particularly for black and Latino students;
- Hundreds of thousands more children are attending high quality pre-school programs;
- Achievement gaps by race and gender are closing;
- More black and Latino students are attending college; and
- The most recent national data saw the largest, most diverse class completing higher education in our history.

"But, for all our progress, more is required to meet the challenges our nation will face in the years to come..." King said. "It is not enough for those already prosperous to prosper. Unless we are ensuring that all Americans can meaningfully participate in our nation's growth, our nation will not succeed."

King also called for equitable funding for the students, schools and districts that need the most help, reiterated the benefits of school diversity for all students, and called on education leaders to remain focused on preschool quality and college completion.

“We must continue to press on, firm in the knowledge that when we pull others up, they do not pull us down. When the light of opportunity shines on those who lack it, it does not dim for those already in its glow.”

To read the full article and Secretary King’s remarks, please click [here](#).

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

### ***Educators:***

#### **2. RIDE seeks educator input to inform legislative study**

During the last session, the General Assembly passed legislation, subsequently signed by Governor Raimondo, which requires RIDE to conduct a study related to curriculum, professional development, and leadership needs in Rhode Island.

As part of our work to support this study, RIDE has created a survey to gather input from Rhode Island educators. Participation from *all educators* (including teachers, superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, special education directors, principals and other building-level administrators) is extremely important to this process and will help inform the future of education in Rhode Island.

We thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this short survey by **Friday, December 23**: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ri-edsurvey>

### ***Leadership:***

#### **3. RIDE announces free leadership fellowship with School Retool**

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), IDEO, and the Stanford Institute of Design are excited to announce the expansion of School Retool to Rhode Island. This fellowship provides another leadership opportunity to educators in addition to those RIDE is already providing through the leadership mini-grant competition.

School Retool is an opportunity for leaders to re-think what is possible in their school and to learn and try out a framework for making change that starts with small experiments, called hacks, that can lead to big transformations in student outcomes over time. Through the fellowship, leaders learn how to start small, fail forward, and adopt a bias to action in their work. Following the fellowship, leaders are equipped with a set of tools and experiences that they continue to leverage as they build on the work started in School Retool. Check out this [video](#) to learn more about a principal's journey in the fellowship.

The Fellowship is free to leaders, runs from February through April, and will include in-person workshops, personal coaching, peer

support, and lots of inspiration. Each participant is required to commit five full days over the three-month fellowship.

Interested school leaders should submit an application by **January 12, 2017** at [www.schoolretool.org](http://www.schoolretool.org). While open to all school leaders, a preference exists for middle or high school principals from schools where at least 40% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch.

For further information or support regarding this grant, email Stephen Osborn at [Stephen.Osborn@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Stephen.Osborn@ride.ri.gov).

***Legal:***

**4. Decision issued on personnel and talent management language in the Basic Education Program (BEP)**

RIDE has issued this Commissioner's Decision on language relating to personnel and talent management in the Basic Education Program (BEP):

Warwick School Committee v. Warwick Teachers' Union, Local 915, AFT, and the Rhode Island Department of Education: "The Basic Education Program (BEP) is a valid regulation with the full force of law and is therefore effectively written into the collective bargaining agreement between the Warwick School Committee and the Warwick Teachers' Union. Given that the BEP does not allow for job fairs that assign teachers to specific assignments

based solely on seniority, Warwick must implement a new methodology of assigning teachers that comports with the BEP.”

To read the full decision, please click [here](#).

### ***Data Collection:***

#### **5. SurveyWorks update on webinars for site coordinators, new website**

Better than 70% of schools have assigned a site coordinator for the upcoming surveys. RIDE will be scheduling webinars in early January for all site coordinators.

We have developed a website at [Surveyworks.ride.ri.gov](https://surveyworks.ride.ri.gov) to keep all stakeholder informed.

Please contact Peg Votta (401-222-8412, [margaret.votta@ride.ri.gov](mailto:margaret.votta@ride.ri.gov)) if you have questions. Thank you for your interest and commitment.

#### **6. Reminder: Dates changed for reviewing Student Exit Data for Calculation of Cohort Graduation Rates**

We moved the dates out a week for: [Reviewing Student Exit Data for Calculation of Cohort Graduation Rates](#). The module opened December

8<sup>th</sup>, and will close on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Extensions *will not* be given so please make sure to complete it on time.

**7. *Reminder: ISS Pre-K Module data updates clarification***

We have updated the documentation to help clarify the coding of preschoolers in the enrollment and TCS files. The new documentation is located [here](#).

**8. *Reminder: Teacher Attendance collection***

Only 12 districts have submitted their teacher attendance records. These data will be used for federal reporting, so if you haven't submitted data for this collection, please do so soon.

**9. *Reminder: Data Collection calendar***

The [Data Collection Calendar](#) contains all of the open and due dates for data collections, and report submissions. These may change as the school year progresses in response to updates by external entities. Please review the calendar on a regular basis in order to remain compliant with data submissions.

**10. *Reminder: Data Collection webinar***

Beginning **Tuesday (December 6)**, the data collection webinar will be at *11 a.m.* on Tuesdays. You will need to [register](#) for the new webinar time.

**11. *Reminder: Several data collections are open, due in next month***

The following are upcoming data-collection deadlines:

- Next Friday (December 23): [Reviewing Student Exit Data for Calculation of Cohort Graduation Rates - Due](#)
- December 30: [Early Childhood Special Education data - Due](#)
- January 12: [Reporting Student Contacts - Due](#)

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.

If you have any questions about data collections or the webinar, please submit a help-desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

***Meetings:***

**12. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to meet on Tuesday (December 20)**

The next Council on Elementary and Secondary Education meeting will take place on **Tuesday** (December 20), at 5:30 p.m., at the Providence Campus of the University of Rhode Island (Paff Auditorium, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor), 80 Washington Street, Providence. RIDE will post the agenda and supporting documents **today** (December 16) by 5:30pm.

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

#### **13. USED opens applications for Summer 2017 Student Internships**

High school students: Have you ever wondered about pursuing a federal career? Are you interested in public service? Would you like to gain valuable work experience and help move the needle on education issues in this country?

An internship at USED is one of the best ways students can learn about education policy and working in the civil service. It's also a fantastic opportunity to develop crucial workplace skills that will help you in whatever career path you choose. And, it's an opportunity to meet fellow students who share your passion for education, learning, and engagement.

USED is accepting applications for Summer 2017 internships through **March 15, 2017**.

[Click here](#) for more information or to get started on your application today.

For the full announcement, click [here](#).

#### **14. Arts in Education Program seeking input for 2017 competition**

The Arts in Education (AIE) Program supports nationwide efforts to improve schools in and through the arts as part of a well-rounded education for all students. AIE’s grants and technical assistance support a variety of organizations including school districts, non-profit organizations, and other entities through three grant categories: Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD), Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE), and Arts in Education National Program (AENP).

In Fiscal Year 2017, the AIE Program is [preparing a competition for grants](#) in accordance with its authorization under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), under Section 4642, Assistance for Arts Education, and Subpart 4—Academic Enrichment, which allows for awards to “promote arts education for students, including disadvantaged students and students who are children with disabilities through such activities as:

- professional development for arts educators, teachers, and principals;

- development and dissemination of accessible instructional materials and arts-based educational programming, including online resources, in multiple arts disciplines; and
- community and national outreach activities that strengthen and expand partnerships among schools, local educational agencies, communities, or centers for the arts, including national centers for the arts.”

[View the complete details](#) on the Assistance for Arts Education section of ESSA.

The AIE Program is accepting comments from stakeholders interested in the new competition until **Monday, January 9, 2017**. Please send them by email to [AIEcompetition@ed.gov](mailto:AIEcompetition@ed.gov).

Click [here](#) to learn more about the AIE program.

### **15. *Reminder: Applications for School Ambassador Fellowship open***

USED announced the availability of the [online application](#) for the 2017-18 [School Ambassador Fellowship](#). This program is designed to broaden the agency’s Teaching Ambassador Fellowship and Principal Ambassador Fellowship programs to allow other professional school personnel – like counselors, librarians, parent liaisons, and assistant principals – to apply. The goal is to create a cadre of outstanding educators to inform the work of USED, while expanding their own

knowledge and expertise as they participate in and help lead the national education dialogue.

As in previous years, applicants may choose to apply as Washington Fellows – a full-time appointment where fellows are based in residence at the agency’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. – or as Campus Fellows – a part-time appointment where fellows collaborate with the agency while maintaining their regular school responsibilities in their home communities. The application closes **January 23, 2017**.

### **From other organizations**

#### **16. Newport Jazz Assembly Band available for free school performances**

The Newport Jazz Assembly Band is available to do performances at elementary and middle schools starting in January - May 2017, particularly in areas where there aren't music programs. This outreach program is a project of Newport Festivals Foundation, which produces the Newport Jazz and Newport Folk Festivals and is provided at no cost to the schools.

A preview of the program can be seen [here](#).

If your school is interested, please contact Deborah Ross at [deborah@newportfestivalsfoundation.org](mailto:deborah@newportfestivalsfoundation.org) or by calling 212-452-3036.

**17. Students encouraged to participate in 2017 Get Healthy!  
Rhode Island Poster Contest**

Teachers – the 2017 Get Healthy! Poster Contest is here. The American Heart Association asks kids in grades K-5: How do you get healthy? Students are encouraged to draw a poster and show everyone their answer – be creative! In addition to being entered to win great prizes, students’ posters will help educate lawmakers about the importance of supporting policies that promote access to healthy foods and opportunities to play and be active in Rhode Island.

To learn more, click [here](#). This competition is sponsored by the American Heart Association, the American Stroke Association, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island in partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation.

***RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:***

[www.ride.ri.gov/Field-Memos](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Field-Memos)