



RIDE News

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Source: Notes from Commissioner Wagner – Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo

RIDE making progress toward development of ESSA transition plan

We are proceeding with our work to develop a comprehensive plan to align our education system with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). We anticipate submitting our plan to the U.S. Department of Education on or by July 1.

To help us formulate the Rhode Island plan for transition to ESSA, we are holding monthly meetings with our Committee of Practitioners and we are holding Community Forums. We have held four Community Forums to date (in Providence, Lincoln, Coventry, and, Thursday night, in Portsmouth), where attendance has ranged from 40 to upwards of 70 participants. We have one more scheduled forum, to take place on Monday, in South Kingstown. RIDE staff members, members of the Committee of Practitioners, and some representatives from the team who led the development of our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan are leading the conversations at these community forums.

Thanks to this process, we are gathering insightful input that is guiding us as we design the Rhode Island plan. As we move forward, we are working to ensure that we build formal connections between our Strategic Plan and the ESSA transition plan.

Early conversations about our transition to ESSA confirm that we must build upon our implementation of academic standards: the Common Core State Standards (in literacy and mathematics) and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Regarding high-school assessments, our preliminary recommendation is that we employ a hybrid approach, using the SAT college-readiness test in grade 11 and the PARCC course-based tests in grade-9 (Algebra I and English 9). The use of college-readiness assessments such as the PSAT and SAT, available to students at no cost and during the school day, is an equity strategy that helps all students see college as an option and apply for college admission.

We are also developing a series of indicators that will be part of our accountability index and of the school, district, and state report cards, which could include reduced chronic absenteeism as a measure of student engagement, completion of challenging coursework, and other measures of school climate.

One point of agreement is that we need to include more than just test scores as we support continuous improvement of teaching and learning in our schools. We are eager to design and develop report cards that include a comprehensive set of information for educators, families, students, and the community.

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