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Friday, February 5, 2016**

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March 31: [Textbook Data Collection](#) due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Governor Raimondo's budget proposal includes education investments

We should all be pleased that, even in this challenging economic climate, Governor Raimondo has proposed a budget for the next fiscal year (Fiscal Year 2017) that includes significant new investments in public education. Governor Raimondo's budget:

- makes record investments in PK-12 schools with additional funding of more than \$40 million so all children have the opportunity to attend a high-quality public school;
- puts students' needs first by improving the funding formula with a steady approach to help all schools; her proposed budget nearly doubles funding dedicated to students with special needs and provides new funding for English-learner programs;
- invests \$1.2 million to continue expanding high-quality prekindergarten options for our youngest learners;
- invests \$1.75 million in high-quality professional development for teachers and principals; and
- commits to increasing access to computer-science classes.

We are continuing to analyze the budget and its effect on local communities, and we are posting information such as your anticipated aid allocations on our website:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/FundingSources/StateEducationAid.aspx>

2. *Reminder:* RIDE seeking brief accounts of amazing work under way in R.I. schools

We at RIDE are always interested in hearing about great work under way in your schools, and all of us often mention programs and initiatives that are innovative and effective when we speak with community groups, business leaders, elected officials, and people in the education field. Don't be left out of the picture! We are asking each Rhode Island school and school community to send us one or two brief accounts of amazing things happening in your school – preferably, initiatives involving teamwork. Send for each an email of no more than 100 words or a one-minute video clip, using the subject line “Amazing,” to info@ride.ri.gov. We'll be sure to spread the word.

3. *Reminder:* Schools encouraged to consider using open educational resources

Teaching and learning improve only when teachers have time to collaborate, analyze the learning standards, develop curriculum and lessons, review student work, observe one another, get feedback, and reflect on their practice. As part of our commitment to invest in leadership development for educators, we are encouraging schools to use high-quality open educational resources – free curriculum and instructional materials that can be adopted for local purposes and free up money, to be used for

ongoing professional development, that you would otherwise spend on traditional commercial products.

Here are some of the open educational resources that the U.S. Department of Education has identified as part of its “Go Open” initiative and that #GoOpen districts are currently using:

- <https://www.engageny.org/resource/grades-9-12-mathematics-curriculum-map-and-course-overviews>
- <https://cnx.org/search?q=subject:%22Mathematics%20and%20Statistics%22%20pubYear:%222015%22>
- <http://linear.ups.edu/curriculum.html>
- <http://danaernst.com/resources/free-and-open-source-textbooks/>
- <http://www.opentextbookstore.com/catalog.php>
- <http://www.openculture.com/free-math-textbooks>
- <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/SearchResults.aspx?subjectAreaId=7>
- <http://matheducators.stackexchange.com/questions/1816/open-source-high-school-textbooks>
- <http://www.uen.org/oer/>
- <http://classroom-aid.com/open-educational-resources/curriculum/>
- <http://opensource4text.org/>

4. USDA publication recognizes two Rhode Islanders for their work on school nutrition

The initial publication from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Northeast Region Food and Nutrition Service, “The Cafeteria Chronicles,” introduces readers to local leaders in the healthy-school movement. The publication features two Rhode Islanders

who are on the “frontlines of wellness”: Mary Anne Role, of the Lincoln School Committee, Tricia Wright, the general manager for Aramark services in the Central Falls Public Schools.

Congratulations on this recognition to Mary Anne and Tricia!

5. Multiple Pathways Office Director Sharon Lee retires

We want to let you know that Sharon Lee, the director of our Office of Multiple Pathways, has retired after 8 ½ years at RIDE. Sharon came here as an education specialist with an expertise in high schools, and she has been part of many aspects of our high-school reform initiative, including implementing performance-based graduation and requirements and our proficiency-based diploma system. She became the office director about 5 years ago, and under her leadership we have revised career-technical education regulations, expanded adult-education services, and advanced our innovation powered by technology initiative, among other accomplishments. We will all miss Sharon as we carry on with these initiatives. At least in the interim, Steve Osborn (Stephen.Osborn@ride.ri.gov) will be your best contact for issues concerning Multiple Pathways (adult education, career-technical education, diploma system, innovations powered by technology).

6. *Reminder*: Registration open for conference February 27 on African-American history in R.I.

In June 2014, the State of Rhode Island General Assembly established the [1696 Historical Commission](#) to develop an African-American History curriculum, encompassing the historical period from 1696 to 2015, for use in all Rhode Island public schools. The commission’s name recognizes the first documented group of enslaved Africans who landed aboard the brig *Seaflower* in Newport in 1696. The charge of the commission was, according to

Representative Joseph S. Almeida (D-Dist. 12, Providence), to ensure “teachers have the tools and resources they need to teach a well-rounded, inclusive view of the people and events – both the honorable ones and the shameful chapters – that brought our nation and our state to where it is today.” To ensure the youth of Rhode Island recognize and appreciate the contributions made by African-Americans and the integral role they played in the history of the Ocean State, the work of the commission will continue under the guidance of a task force headed by the Rhode Island Historical Society.

In honor of the work of the 1696 Historical Commission, Rhode Island’s Delta Kappa Gamma Society for Key Women Educators Epsilon Chapter and Rhode Island College’s Feinstein School of Education and Human Development invite you and all teachers to attend:

First Steps: An Exploration of African-American History in Rhode Island

Saturday, **February 27**, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Rhode Island College, Alger Hall 110

Through a series of interactive workshops, First Steps will provide teachers with resources and strategies they can use to integrate African-American History into their instruction.

The schedule for the day includes:

8 - 8:30 a.m.: Registration

8:30 - 9 a.m.: Welcome

9 – 10 a.m.: *Workshop I: Using Online Sources Integrating African American Topics in the Study of US and Rhode Island History*, by Keith Stokes

10:05 - 11:05 a.m.: Workshop II: *Using Drama and Storytelling in Teaching Youth History*, by Valerie Tutson and Sylvia Soares

11:10 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.: Workshop III: *Introducing an App to Engage Youth in an Interactive Study of African American History*, by Theresa Moore

12:15 - 1:30 p.m.: Luncheon and Keynote Speaker, Commissioner Ken Wagner

Participants will have the opportunity to attend all three workshops. Each workshop will consist of a presentation followed by time for group and team discussions. We encourage you and a team of your teachers to join teachers from throughout the state as together we take these “First Steps.” Please use the Registration Form found [here](#) to register each team member.

From RIDE

Standards:

7. *Reminder:* Registration open for Winter Standards Institute on Common Core standards

The Achievement Network will be offering a Winter Standards Institute on the Common Core standards February 17 through the 20. The institute is an opportunity for a community of practitioners to think deeply about their work, get smarter about research and materials, and confront the challenges of meeting high standards with all students. The institute will provide intensive, content-based learning experiences for teachers and leaders in multiple grade bands in one of three pathways: mathematics, English Language Arts/literacy, and Leadership.

For information on the institute and on registration, see:

<http://www.standardsinstitutes.org/institute/winter-standards-institute>

Educators:

8. Online certification renewal now open for educators with certificates expiring August 31

Online certification renewal is available for My eCert users who have Full certificates (Initial or Professional) expiring on August 31 of this year. School Nurse Teacher and School Social Worker certificates must always be renewed by paper, as the renewal application must be accompanied by a copy of a valid license.

Educators should keep in mind that renewing early and online will allow them to pay electronically and receive expedited processing. Educators should also know that online or early renewal does not, in any way, shorten the term of their certificates. For example, if an educator renews a three-year certificate in January, that certificate will maintain the same expiration date of August 31, 2019.

Renewal reminders are being sent this week to all educators who have a current email address on file within the eCert System. Educators are responsible for having a valid email address in the My eCert portal to ensure receipt of critical, time-sensitive certification information. RIDE recommends that you notify all educators in your LEA that it is their responsibility to update their email in My eCert to ensure that they are receiving all correspondence from RIDE. To update contact information or renew certificates on the My eCert portal on RIDEmap, visit:

<https://ridemap.ride.ri.gov/default.aspx>

Educators who are currently employed and do not have any previous ratings or who have one or more Ineffective ratings must wait until August 1 to renew. Educators who hold Full Professional certificates, as well as all support professionals, will renew at their current level of their certificate.

All other certificates must be renewed via a paper application.

9. *Reminder (with updated URL): LEAs asked to recommend 1 to 3 distinguished teachers for talent pool; deadline, March 25 – Action Item*

RIDE maintains a file of distinguished teachers and principals. Throughout the year, these educators may be considered for leadership opportunities such as membership on advisory boards and task forces as well as for state and national recognition programs. This year, RIDE is asking each district to *recommend 1 to 3 educators* who represent educators relatively new to the profession (5 to 12 years), who demonstrate strong leadership skills and instructional practices, and who have a positive impact on students, colleagues, and the community.

Please click on the following link to download the recommendation form:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Recognition/Rhode Island Educator-Leader Talent Pool 2016.docx>

When you submit your recommendations, please include:

- Talent Pool Recommendation Form;
- One-page narrative that addresses how the candidate meets the criteria; and
- resume of recommended educator.

Thank you for taking the time to make your recommendations.

Please send the completed packet of information by Friday, **March 25**, to Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov.

10. *Reminder: Educators encouraged to apply to participate in the Teacher Performance Calibration Summit; deadline, February 12*

On March 22 and March 23, RIDE will convene approximately 25 educators (teachers, building administrators, and district administrators) from throughout the state to review the performance expectations from across the five state-approved teacher evaluation systems. Participants will engage in an exercise looking at profiles of educators (i.e., examples of how teachers might score on various evaluation components) and measuring these profiles against new performance-level descriptors (i.e., descriptions of what highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective teacher performance looks like). Participants will be charged with recommending final cut scores to be used to determine Final Effectiveness Ratings. The summit will be held at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative.

RIDE will select participants based on educators' applications and their commitment to participation. Interested educators should review the benefits of participation, review the selection criteria, and complete the application, at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/summitapp>.

Applications are due by **February 12**.

If you have questions about this summit, please e-mail us at edeval@ride.ri.gov.

Finance:

11. Statewide Facilities Assessment to begin this month; LEAs asked to designate contact by February 12 – *Action Item*

The School Building Authority at RIDE has as one of its responsibilities management of a system with a goal of ensuring equitable and adequate school housing for all public-school students. To help achieve this goal, we have engaged an educational-facility planning team, Jacobs, to lead a statewide facility-condition assessment and create a statewide master plan that will direct long-range capital planning for improvement efforts and investment across the state. Jacobs anticipates deploying assessment teams beginning Monday, February 15. The assessments will be completed in phases, so multiple visits to your community will be scheduled.

Please provide a point of contact to joseph.dasilva@ride.ri.gov by Friday, **February 12**. The point of contact will coordinate directly with Jacobs regarding the school visits. Please anticipate hearing from a Jacobs representative to resolve any questions specific to your LEA and to distribute an assessment schedule, in advance of the teams visiting your schools.

If you have any questions about this facilities assessment, please contact Joseph da Silva, Ph.D., at 222-4294 or via email at joseph.dasilva@ride.ri.gov.

Innovation Powered by Technology:

12. R.I. prepares to celebrate digital learning

Educators and students are doing some amazing things with technology across Rhode Island, but with so many new types of digital devices, educational software, and mobile apps being developed, it's hard to keep up with the latest advancements in educational technology. Digital Learning Day was started as a way to actively spread innovative practices and ensure that all learners have access to high-quality digital learning opportunities, no matter where they live. On February 17, thousands of schools and local communities will celebrate the 5th anniversary of Digital Learning Day. One day is not enough. Rhode Island will celebrate all month long!

How will you celebrate? Visit the RIDE website to [add your Digital Learning Day activity](#) to the interactive map, [find inspiration and collaborate](#) with others, access the [Digital Learning Day Communications Toolkit](#), or nominate a [Digital Learning Champion!](#) Contact [Holly Walsh](#) for more information about digital learning celebrations.

Re-imagining High Schools:

13. High-school principals asked to select students to participate in input session

We have sent this notice to high-school principals:

As you know, we are in the process of gathering input on the Rhode Island high-school experience and the diploma system, in hopes of meeting the ambitions of our statewide education [strategic plan](#). The most important stakeholders in this work are our students, and their input is vital to the successful redesign of the secondary-school regulations.

We would like to invite 1 or 2 students from your school to attend a town hall-style input session with their peers from across Rhode Island. We are eager to hear student reflections on the high-school experience in the following areas: coursework, diploma assessments (i.e., senior project or exhibition, portfolio), standardized assessments, and how learning has been personalized to them. There will also be time for students to ask questions and provide suggestions on behalf of themselves and their school community. Students will have an opportunity to participate in person, if circumstances allow, or virtually, if that is more convenient for them.

Event Information:

Date: **February 23**

Time: 6 – 8 p.m.

Place: Room S330, New England Institute of Technology, 1 New England Tech Boulevard, East Greenwich

We ask you to help us nominate student representatives and have them register [at this link](#). Further details on how to participate virtually will be sent to students who have registered.

Please contact Felicia Brown (Felicia.brown@ride.ri.gov) with any questions about this session.

From other state agencies

14. STEM Center @ RIC conducting survey on STEM, STEAM programs, partnerships

The Rhode Island STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts + design, Mathematics) Now Coalition is a broad alliance of nearly 250 individuals from across the state representing business, education, and government, organized and coordinated by the Rhode Island STEM Center. We are working together to develop a STEAM-literate population in Rhode Island that will possess the skills to become productive citizens in the 21st century and that will have the capacity to contribute and invigorate the Rhode Island economy.

One of our action items is to identify current and potential STEM or STEAM programs and partnerships so that, as a state, we can establish efficient channels for collaboration, increase productive communication, and support the scaling up of quality STEAM learning experiences. Please share your information with us and complete this brief 10-minute survey:

<http://tinyurl.com/RI-Education-Survey>

This information probably resides with several people at each school. Therefore it is not necessary to find the “appropriate” person to complete the survey. We will collect data from teachers, STEM or STEAM coordinators, principals, superintendents, and community volunteers, even if several people are from the same school or district.

Please note that this survey is for *informational* purposes only. The name of your school and other identifying information will allow us to look comprehensively at the education landscape in Rhode Island to help us move forward as a state.

From the U.S. Department of Education

15. Secretary King issues guidance on reducing unhelpful testing

Acting Education Secretary John B. King, Jr., has issued guidance to help states identify and eliminate low-quality, redundant, or unhelpful testing. You can read the guidance here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saa/16-0002signedccso222016ltr.pdf>

16. U.S. Department of Education develops Financial Aid Toolkit for school counselors

As part of National School Counseling Week, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid has developed a financial-aid toolkit for school counselors. For more information and to access the toolkit, see:

http://blog.ed.gov/2016/02/school-counselors-meet-the-financial-aid-toolkit/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

17. U.S. Department of Education accepting applications for student summer interns; deadline, March 15

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting applications from students, including high-school students, who would like to work at the department as summer interns. Applications are due on **March 15**. For more information, see:

http://blog.ed.gov/2016/02/ed-seeks-summer-interns-2/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

From other organizations

18. Serve Rhode Island welcomes food donations to help needy AmeriCorps members

We have become increasingly aware that some of our AmeriCorps members at Serve Rhode Island (SRI) are finding it more difficult to make ends meet with their limited stipends and the high cost of food, rents, transportation, etc. This week we have been supplying a food cupboard of canned and packaged food in our office for AmeriCorps members who may find themselves in a bind when other community resources are not available or in short supply. We invite you to contribute canned goods (or a financial contribution for food) to help supply this food cupboard at SRI's office (655 Broad St., Suite 202, Providence).

19. TNTP seeks applicants for fellowships; deadline, March 15

Our public schools deserve our nation's best thinking. That's why we're excited to announce TNTP's [Bridge Fellowship](#), a 12-month

residency for leaders with bold new ideas for public education. The fellowship will “bridge” many disciplines, cultivating the best ideas from inside and outside the education sector.

In the inaugural year, two Bridge Fellows will grapple with a critical question: How can we prepare more African-American and Latino males for success in school and beyond? Fellows will reimagine the school experience for these students and think holistically about ways school systems can dramatically increase their success.

Fellows may come from any profession and approach this issue from any angle. During the paid, full-time year with TNTP, Fellows will advance their big idea and gain hands-on experience with schools and districts.

Do you know a future Bridge Fellow? Help us spread the word. We’re looking for innovators with fresh perspectives on the issues that shape students’ experiences at school. We’re particularly interested in voices that are underrepresented in education, including those from the communities we serve.

Applications are due **March 15**, and the fellowship begins in August. To learn more, see:

http://tntp.org/about-tntp/bridge-fellowship?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Bridge%2520Fellowship%2520Announcement%2520Email&utm_content=Bridge%2520Fellowship%2520Announcement%2520Email+CID_644657c02cc53596c167fa170969755e&utm_source=Campaign%2520Monitor%2520Master%2520List&utm_term=LEARN%2520MORE

20. Summer Scholar Program for college students interested in postsecondary policy; application deadline, March 15

The Postsecondary National Policy Institute (PNPI) is delighted to announce the inaugural season of the PNPI Summer Scholar Program (May 23 through August 4). PNPI's Summer Scholar Program will provide a unique opportunity for a highly motivated undergraduate or graduate student with demonstrated financial need to research postsecondary issues, attend postsecondary events, and help shape professional development seminars for current and prospective higher education policymakers, all while offering the financial support needed to live and work full-time in Washington, D.C.

The Summer Scholar Program is one of several avenues by which PNPI hopes to introduce new voices to the federal policymaking process. Applicants to the Scholar program will be required to demonstrate full-time undergraduate or graduate enrollment at an accredited institution of higher education and proof of financial need. All majors and fields of study will be considered, but candidates must indicate an interest in postsecondary-education policy or practice.

Applications are currently available on [PNPI's website](http://pnpi.org/summer-scholar-program/) (<http://pnpi.org/summer-scholar-program/>) and are due by 5 p.m. on **March 15**. Please feel free to share this email or the link to the application to any or all of your networks. We are hoping to hear from a robust group of applicants.

21. Students invited to enter Woods Hole student-video contest

Teachers, tell your students ages 13 to 18: Amazing contest for students interested in the sea, from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Happening now: #SpeakForTheOcean

Students, give the ocean a voice! If the ocean could speak, what would it say? What would you say on the ocean's behalf? Make a 30-second video to show the world your ideas. Be creative, and #SpeakForTheOcean!

The Grand Prize is a trip to Woods Hole, Massachusetts, to tour the nation's newest ocean research ship, the R/V *Neil Armstrong*, and have a behind-the-scenes tour of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to see how ocean scientists and engineers are working to understand Earth's ocean.

The #SpeakForTheOcean Contest runs through. For contest rules and more information, see:

<http://www.whoi.edu/SpeakForTheOcean>.

22. Environmental educators' Kids Adventure Zone opens school vacation week at Spring Flower & Garden Show

During school break, February 18 through 21, the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) will present the new Kids Adventure Zone as part of the Rhode Island Spring Flower & Garden Show, at the Rhode Island Convention Center. Situated on the fifth floor, the Kids Adventure Zone is an interactive nature play space designed to allow imaginations to run wild. RIEEA members will engage children with hands-on activities, such as fairy-house building, fishing, and camping. Kids are bound to learn a thing or two as they wander through the "yard," over the

“pond,” and through the “woods,” playing and exploring along the way.

In a large room adjacent to the play space, presentations will be taking place throughout the four days and will include live animal presentations, wild-plant magic, local story tellers, and puppet shows. Kids of all ages are also enchanted by the garden displays on the main floor of the Flower & Garden Show. This is a wonderful opportunity for children, parents, and teachers to increase their knowledge of plants, gardening, and the environment. More information is available, at <http://rieaa.org/ri-flower-show-feb-18-21/> . Tickets are \$17 per adult, \$7 per child aged 7-12, free for children under 7.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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