

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Thursday, December 24, 2015**

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. [Holiday greetings](#) from RIDE
2. State assessments will not be a [graduation requirement](#) for Class of 2020
3. South Kingstown High students win [planning award](#)

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

Early Learning:

4. RIDE to hold webinar on **January 12** on implementing the [Kindergarten Entry Profile](#)

From other organizations

5. Registration opens for winter [Standards Institute](#) in Boston

Action Item Calendar

None at this time

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Holiday greetings from RIDE

It has been a pleasure working with you on many important issues over the past five months. I look forward to the many exciting opportunities before us in the coming school year, as we continue to look at ways to provide our students with challenging, engaging instruction and with multiple opportunities to earn a high-school diploma and to prepare for success in postsecondary education and a challenging career. We at RIDE wish you a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy new year. We will send the next Field Memo to you on January 8.

2. State assessments will not be a graduation requirement for Class of 2020

As we noted in last week's Field Memo, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education discussed the need to change the date by which students must succeed on state assessments in order to earn a high-school diploma. Under the current [Secondary Regulations](#), students have to meet a state-assessment requirement beginning with the Class of 2020 – students currently in grade 8. Because some of these grade-8 students will take high-school assessments this spring (i.e., Algebra 1 or Geometry), before the Council has finalized any potential changes to the graduation requirements, we proposed that the Council hold back on implementing the regulations, and we are going forward with that proposal. Therefore, state assessments will not be a component of the graduation requirements for students in the Class of 2020. We will continue to seek input from stakeholders

regarding the Rhode Island Diploma System, and we will bring the matter before the Council for further discussion and review later in the school year.

3. South Kingstown High students win planning award

Congratulations to the students on the South Kingstown High School Green Team, winners of the 2015 Student Award from the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association, for their work (with Tupelo Gardenworks) on the school courtyard master plan. The APA Planning Awards recognize “projects that embody innovation, comprehensiveness, collaboration, transferability to other communities, and a commitment to implementation.”

From RIDE

Early Learning:

4. RIDE to hold webinar on January 12 on implementing the Kindergarten Entry Profile

The use of a Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) supports teachers to better understand children’s knowledge and skills as they begin kindergarten and to collect assessment data that can inform kindergarten instruction. These data can also guide teachers’ professional development and affect district- and state-level policy decisions, all in the service of improving outcomes for children, particularly those with high needs. Successful implementation of the KEP requires high-quality, developmentally appropriate instruction paired with strong curricula and formative assessment strategies.

RIDE, as part of the [North Carolina Formative Assessment Consortium](#), has been working to develop and pilot a KEP. As we continue to pilot the KEP in several districts across the state, we are seeking additional districts interested in helping us better understand the systems and supports needed in order to successfully implement the KEP. We have contracted with a vendor to provide technical assistance to participating districts in order to evaluate current systems and supports and develop plans to improve the alignment of kindergarten curriculum, assessment, and instruction to developmentally appropriate practices, enhance current Pre-K transition practices, and prepare teachers to implement the KEP. This work will be conducted from approximately in March through October.

Interested districts are welcome to join an informational webinar, to be held Tuesday, January 12, at 4 p.m. Click here to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7707948516959361026>

If you have questions about the KEP or are unable to attend the webinar, please feel free to contact Judi Stevenson-Garcia, at judi.stevenson-garcia@ride.ri.gov.

From other organizations

5. Registration opens for winter Standards Institute in Boston

The Standards Institutes are excited to announce that registration for the February Standards Institute, in Boston, February 17-20, is now open! Click here:

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

Our 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. We provide intensive, content-based learning experiences for teachers and leaders in multiple grade bands across math, ELA and leadership. Watch a short video about our summer Standards Institute here:

<https://vimeo.com/139157403>

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, January 5, at:

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