

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, August 30, 2013

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Attachments to this Field Memo

College-Career Readiness 8-26-13
Latino Policy Institute Report 8-26-13

September 9: [SurveyWorks](#) site coordinators appointed
September 23: [RITEAF forms](#) due
September 27: [UCOA](#) files due

Notes from Commissioner Gist

1. RIDE, Higher Education provide report on college readiness

Along with the Office of Higher Education, RIDE provided the Board of Education on Monday (August 26) with a report on the “college pipeline” in Rhode Island: “Following our Students Through Higher Education.” The report documents that “student persistence through higher education is a statewide concern.” Data in the report show that, of students entering grade 11 (8,971 students in 2008), about 73 percent go on to graduate from high school on time and to enroll in institutions of higher education. Of those who do enroll in institutions of higher education (6,543 students), only about 65 percent (4,281) make it to the third semester.

Clearly, the information in this report further highlights that, even among the students who graduate on time from our high schools, far too many are not prepared for success in postsecondary education. As part of our report at the Board Retreat, we presented the Board with some recommended actions that the Board could take, including development of goals, an action plan, a legislative package, and monitoring procedures. We at RIDE will continue to work with you to meet the overall objective of our

strategic plan: ensuring that all of our graduates are ready for success in college and in challenging careers. I have attached a copy of the report to this Field Memo: College-Career Readiness 8-26-13 (see slides 13ff).

2. Latino Policy Institute issues report on Latino students

On Tuesday (August 27), the Latino Policy Institute at Roger Williams University released a report, “Latino Students in Rhode Island: A Review of Local and National Performances.” This report emphasizes that the “the Latino-White achievement gaps in Rhode Island are among some of the worst in the country.” The report makes several recommendations regarding improving instruction for English Learners, increasing the diversity of the teaching corps, and developing “school cultures that foster relationships and personalized educational experiences.”

Closing achievement gaps remains one of the goals of our strategic plan for transforming education, and RIDE has made closing achievement gaps one of the two most heavily weighted components of our Accountability System for schools and districts. Though I have concerns about some of the methodology in the report and I cannot endorse each of the recommendations, I commend the Latino Policy Institute for drawing attention to this issue. Lack of public awareness and concern is certainly one of the obstacles we face as we work to close achievement gaps. Another significant problem stems from the low expectations that too many hold for large groups of Rhode Island students. We have made some progress in closing achievement gaps, but not at the rate we need to see in order to meet our goal: reduction of achievement gaps by 50 percent by 2015. I am confident that we can continue to work toward high expectations and rich opportunities for all students, including Latino/Hispanic students

and all English Learners. At this time, the Institute has not posted the report on its website, but I have attached a copy to this Field Memo: Latino Policy Institute Report 8-26-13.

From RIDE

Training and webinars:

3. *Reminder:* RIDE schedules NECAP test-coordinator training workshops

Seats are still available in the upcoming face-to-face NECAP training workshops for district- and school-level test coordinators. The workshops will provide the important details associated with the coordination and administration of the October 2013 NECAP tests for grades 3 through 8 and 11. These workshops will also provide attendees with updates on policies and procedures as well as with opportunities to ask questions. Dates, times, locations, and registration instructions for the test-administration workshops are included below. Please sign up for only one workshop as the material presented will be the same at all three:

- September 9 @ 1 – 3 p.m., Providence Marriott Downtown, 1 Orms St.
- September 10 @ 9 – 11 a.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick
- September 10 @ 1 – 3 p.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick

To register for a workshop, go to:

<http://iregister.measuredprogress.org/SessionList.aspx>

You may also register in person on the day of each workshop 30 minutes before the scheduled start time.

For those unable to attend one of the face-to-face workshops, we will schedule an interactive WebEx online workshop at a later date, and we will also post the WebEx on the RIDE website for later viewing. An announcement will be made in the Field Memo once details are finalized.

If you have any questions about these workshops, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov or 222-8494).

4. RIDE to offer training on Interim Assessments, including the Test Construction Tool and Scoring

District leaders and lead educators, including building administrators, are encouraged to attend the Interim Assessments training on Wednesday, **September 18**. The training will cover both the fixed-form assessments and the test-construction tool, as well as:

- an overview of the technical systems, including test management, scanning, and scoring;
- sessions with RIDE content specialists in mathematics, English language arts, and science to learn what content is covered on the fixed-form assessments and which standards are included in the test construction tool;
- professional development on scoring constructed-response items; and
- report interpretation.

The format of this training is similar to an educational conference; there will be sessions throughout the day on the above topics. Please see eRIDE for a schedule of sessions and to [register](#). Educators can attend any of the sessions in the morning, afternoon, or both, but all participants will need to attend one of the systems trainings. The training will be held at RIDE, Room 243, 255 Westminster St./80 Washington St., Providence.

Legal:

5. RIDE posts decisions on teacher suspensions and terminations, intra-district transfers, student retention

Please see these four recent Commissioner's Decisions on issues relating to teacher suspension or termination, a request for intra-district transfer, and grade retention:

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/019-13 Ciprian v. Providence S.B. 82813.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/019-13_Ciprian_v._Providence_S.B._82813.pdf)

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/022-13 McKinney vs. Barrington S.D. 082813.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/022-13_McKinney_vs._Barrington_S.D._082813.pdf)

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/020-13 Student N.D.M. v. Cranston S. C. 082813.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/020-13_Student_N.D.M._v._Cranston_S._C._082813.pdf)

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/021-13 Student B. DOE V. Cranston S C 8-28-13.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2013/021-13_Student_B._DOE_V._Cranston_S_C_8-28-13.pdf)

Surveys:

6. SurveyWorks 2013-14 to begin November 12; principals to appoint site coordinators by September 9 – *Action Item*

We received your feedback from the field and are pleased to announce that SurveyWorks, our annual survey of students, parents, teachers, and staff members, will begin on Tuesday, **November 12**, and will run through Friday, December 13. This earlier timeline will create an opportunity for schools to implement SurveyWorks during parent-teacher conferences as an important component of home-school communication. We are asking for your assistance in getting the word out and supporting our efforts by collaborating with your principals to reach as many parents and guardians as possible. More specifically, we are asking for help with the following:

- data managers to update the master district list and school profile in eRide; and
- principals to appoint site coordinators no later than **September 9** to prepare for survey implementation.

Please visit the SurveyWorks page, at <http://surveyworks.ride.ri.gov>, and the InfoWorks page, at <http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov>, for continued SurveyWorks information.

In the upcoming weeks, we will be reaching out to your principals to assist with the training of new site coordinators and with the implementation of this process as we move forward. The data collected will help provide you with more timely information that you can use to improve education in your schools.

Guidance and templates:

7. RIDE provides additional guidance and templates on compulsory attendance, alternate-learning programs

The Rhode Island Compulsory Attendance Law, RIGL 16-19-1, requires all students who have not yet reached the age of 18 to be continuously enrolled in school or to be enrolled in an approved alternate-learning program. RIDE is providing additional guidance to ensure that LEAs and the alternate-learning programs are adhering to the law and are providing the appropriate supports to students.

The new guidance and additional materials can be accessed on our website, at:

www.ride.ri.gov/compulsoryattendance.

Included in the new *Alternative Learning Guidance* document are:

- protocols for both schools and alternate programs;
- forms to be used in the process of development and monitoring of the alternative program;
- FAQs regarding the statutes; as well as
- the complete statute.

Please contact our [Office of Multiple Pathways](#) if you have questions about the Compulsory Attendance Law.

8. RIDE develops template for letter to incoming freshmen regarding graduation requirements, Diploma System

Regulations and best practice require district and school educators to communicate with families, parents, and students about graduation requirements, student progress toward meeting

those requirements, and the school-level supports provided to help students earn a diploma. In fact, the Rhode Island Secondary School Regulations require LEAs to clearly communicate to their entering freshman students and their families the LEA graduation requirements and the expectations for all students under the Rhode Island Diploma System. To help you with this communication, RIDE has developed a template letter outlining graduation requirements for the Class of 2017. Your schools may adapt and use this template facilitate communication and to distribute to your current freshmen, the Class of 2017. The template letter is available on our website and will soon be available in Portuguese and Spanish as well:

<http://ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/DiplomaSystem/tabid/136/LiveAcclId/16442/Default.aspx>

Educator Excellence:

9. RIDE seeks National Board certification candidate support coach

RIDE is seeking a National Board Candidate Support Coach, a position that will be an opportunity to provide guided support to educators through the National Board Certification Program. Support and guidance will focus on the following areas:

- 5 Core Propositions;
- certification standards;
- writing-portfolio entries;
- videotaping lessons; and
- the submission process and preparation for the assessment-center exercises for National Board Certification candidates.

We are seeking a consultant or consultant team to provide expertise as a National Board consultant or mentor. The consultant-mentor will serve as the subject-matter expert for National Board content areas and activities. The National Board consultant-mentor will work closely with the RIDE staff as well as with National Board Certification candidates.

To learn more about this position, go to:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Certification/NBPTS/NationalBoardSupportCoach.pdf>

If you have any questions regarding the National Board Support Coach position, please contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov or 222-8497.

Educator Evaluations:

10. Video highlights Rhode Island educators' experience implementing Student Learning Objectives

In a short video, several Rhode Island educators reflect on their experiences with the first full year of implementing Student Learning Objectives in their classrooms and schools. In their own words, they describe the challenges, reflect on lessons learned, and articulate what they see as the benefits of this process. You can access the video on the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/OnlineModules.aspx>

11. New Student Learning/Outcome Objective resources available on RIDE website

Many new resources have been added to the RIDE website to help schools and districts effectively implement teacher, support-professional, and building-administrator evaluations, including:

- updated Student Learning/Outcome Objective samples;
- a new online module focused on approving Student Learning/Outcome Objectives; and
- a customizable PowerPoint (Meeting in a Box) that school and district leaders can use with their staff to help communicate the updates to the Rhode Island Model for Teachers and to provide an overview of the Support Professionals Evaluation and Support System.

Here are the links to the resources:

Updated Student Learning/Outcome Objective samples
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/StudentLearningOutcomeObjectives.aspx>

Approving Student Learning/Outcome Objectives online module
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/OnlineModules.aspx>

Meeting in a Box
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/LEAImplementationGuidance.aspx>

12. Updated evaluation forms available in Word

All of the Rhode Island Model evaluation forms for teachers, support professionals, and building administrators are now available on the RIDE website. The Word versions of these evaluation forms mirror the new forms in the Educator Performance and Support System. The Student Learning/Outcome Objective forms are applicable to all Rhode Island educators, regardless of the evaluation system being implemented. You can access the evaluation forms on our website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/GuidebooksForms.aspx>

From the U.S. Department of Education

13. U.S. Department of Education seeks nominations for National Assessment Governing Board

At a time of increasing demand for high standards in education, America's students need wise leadership more than ever. The National Assessment Governing Board has long answered the call—and now you can be a part of the Governing Board's vital work measuring student achievement, and more.

The 26-member Governing Board was established by Congress to set policy for The Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The Governing Board is seeking qualified and passionate individuals to serve four-year terms and help lead groundbreaking initiatives involving NAEP, including efforts to increase parent engagement, improve academic preparedness, and provide innovations in assessment.

The following positions will be open in 2014: chief state school officer, eighth-grade teacher, fourth-grade teacher, secondary-school principal, and general-public member. The term for each of the five positions is October 1, 2014, to September 30, 2018. Learn more about what Governing Board members do and where they come from, and submit a nomination for yourself or someone you know here:

<http://www.nagb.org/nominations2014>

Nominations may be submitted via e-mail or mail to:

Dr. Mary Crovo (nagbnominations@ed.gov)

Deputy Executive Director

National Assessment Governing Board

800 N. Capitol St. NW, Suite 825

Washington, D.C. 20002-4233

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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