

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo  
Friday, September 27, 2013**

**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

***Awards:***

1. Stony Lane Elementary School and the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School named 2013 National [Blue Ribbon](#) Award Schools

***Events:***

2. Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy meets the Summer Reading Challenge and joins Commissioner Gist on [skydive](#) to celebrate literacy education
3. Save the Date: [CCSS Networking Conference](#) - October 26

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

***Common Core:***

4. RIDE offers [professional development](#) on Mathematics Common Core State Standards
5. Upcoming Common Core [outreach](#) events for parents/community, and videos opportunity

***Curriculum Course Linking:***

6. RIDE offers technical assistance for [curriculum-course](#) linking

***Kindergarten:***

7. Funding available to support start-up costs for [full day kindergarten](#)
8. Rhode Island joins consortium to develop [Kindergarten Entry Assessments](#)

***Educator Evaluations:***

9. [Video](#) highlights Rhode Island educators experience implementing Student Learning Objectives
10. [SLO Quality Review](#) Tool available on RIDE website
11. New [resources](#) added to the Assessment Toolkit – *Protocols for Analyzing and Scoring Student Work*

***Certification:***

12. Certification Office [Update](#)

***Health and Safety:***

13. Guidance for Implementation of [CPR Training](#)
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**Action Item Calendar**

October 4: Common Core [survey](#) due

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**Notes from Commissioner Gist**

***Awards:***

- 1. Stony Lane Elementary School and the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School named 2013 National Blue Ribbon Award Schools**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan this week recognized two Rhode Island schools as 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools. Stony Lane Elementary School in North Kingstown won in the High Performing category and the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School won in the Improving School category.

This is the highest honor that the U.S. Department of Education awards to schools. Awarded schools had to demonstrate either exceptionally high

achievement or dramatic improvement in the school not only as a whole but also among all student groups. Only 286 schools were recognized nationwide. Congratulations to Principal Edward Ferrario of Stony Lane and Superintendent Phil Auger of the North Kingstown schools, as well as to Director Victoria Gailliard-Garrick and the Board of Trustees of Davies for this accomplishment. Of course, achieving this level of success takes the combined efforts of the entire school community. Congratulations to all the administrators, teachers, parents, and students of these two schools, and thank you for setting such tremendous examples for us all to follow!

***Events:***

**2. Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy meets the Summer Reading Challenge and joins Commissioner Gist on sky dive to celebrate**

Earlier this year, I issued the "Dive into a Book!: The Summer Reading Challenge," which challenged students to complete all of their summer reading goals and earn the opportunity for their principal or a teacher at their school to join the me on a skydive. I was thrilled that a number of schools across the state took up this challenge as a way to inspire their students to meet their summer reading goals. Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy met the challenge and had the highest percentage of students complete all of their summer-reading goals. Drew Madden, math and data coordinator at Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, will join me tomorrow (Saturday, September 28) at Skydive Newport for this exciting, albeit unorthodox, event to highlight literacy education. Please feel free to join us at 3:00 p.m. to cheer us on. Congratulations to Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy and the thousands of students all across the state who stepped up to the challenge and dove into reading this summer.

**3. Save the Date: CCSS Networking Conference - October 26**

The Educators in Action are pleased to announce the Cut to the Core: Common Core State Standards Networking Conference on October 26th, 2013, at New England Institute of Technology. All educators are encouraged to attend this free event to connect with their peers and learn more about Common Core instruction, implementation and connection to other content areas. Educators from across the state will be facilitating discussions, presenting experiences and leading interactive sessions designed to encourage peer-to-peer collaboration around the Common Core. Registration opens Friday, October 4. For additional

information, please contact [Deb Sgambato](#) (Sarah Barnes Elementary, Johnston) or [Kelly Reyes](#) (Alfred Lima Elementary, Providence)

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

#### ***Common Core:***

#### **4. RIDE offers professional development on Mathematics Common Core State Standards**

RIDE is pleased to be able to offer a professional development (PD) session focusing on the concept of function as developed in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This workshop will highlight the types of experiences students should have in order to develop a deep understanding of this critical concept as described in the CCSS content standards and the variety of expertise required by the Standards for Mathematical Practice. Participants will examine the progression and focus of the function standards from 8th grade through Algebra 1, and see how these standards build on work in the earlier grades. The workshop will be on December 5, 2013 at Lincoln High School. Follow the link below for registration:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Professional-Development>

For questions regarding this Mathematics CCSS professional development, please contact, Susan Pagliaro, at [susan.pagliaro@ride.ri.gov](mailto:susan.pagliaro@ride.ri.gov), or Patricia Carnevale, at [patricia.carnevale@ride.ri.gov](mailto:patricia.carnevale@ride.ri.gov).

#### **5. Upcoming Common Core outreach events for parents/community, and videos opportunity**

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) received a grant from the GE Foundation to help parents and the community to understand what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) mean for our students and our classrooms and how the CCSS prepares our students for college and for challenging careers. As part of this grant, throughout the 2013-2014 school year, RIDE will be conducting outreach to help promote increased understanding of the CCSS throughout the state. We are developing materials and CCSS videos and coordinating outreach events throughout the state.

Over the next several months, representatives from our consultant, PCG Education, will be reaching out to your districts to schedule and plan informational outreach events in your districts. Through these events, members of Rhode Island's Common Core Ambassadors team, a group of experienced local educators, will visit your communities and offer their expertise as to how the CCSS will impact teachers and students in Rhode Island schools.

PCG Education will also be reaching out to districts to invite schools to be featured in short informational videos about RI's transition to the Common Core State Standards. The videos produced from these recording sessions will include examples of Common Core State Standards learning in classrooms as well as information to increase awareness and understanding of Common Core efforts that are currently underway in schools across Rhode Island. Once finalized, videos will be featured on the [RIDE website](#), the [Ready, Set, Go Common Core! Facebook page](#), and other online environments. The videos will also be made available for free download/linking to businesses and community organizations (e.g., libraries) for use as a video loop on display screens.

We welcome you to join RIDE in helping Rhode Island to successfully transition to the Common Core! We thank you in advance for your support in planning these events and helping to spread the word about the CCSS. If you have any questions about the videos, or to schedule an outreach event for parents and the community in your district, please contact Lauren Bryar and our Common Core Outreach Team from PCG Education at [CommonCoreRI@pcgus.com](mailto:CommonCoreRI@pcgus.com).

### ***Curriculum-Course Linking:***

#### **6. RIDE offers technical assistance for curriculum-course linking**

The Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum will be offering technical assistance via webinar for curriculum-course linking in the Instructional Management System. Linking curriculum to courses is **required** for teachers to use curriculum and/or Interim assessment reports. Without this link, Interim Assessment reports and curriculum cannot be accessed.

LEAs that completed this process last year and have submitted their TCS data do not have to link courses from the previous year. However, any new courses or curriculum will need to be linked. Please contact Kate Schulz at 401-222-8489 or [kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov) with questions or to schedule a webinar tutorial.

## ***Kindergarten:***

### **7. Funding available to support start-up costs for full day kindergarten**

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) seeks proposals from RI school districts committed to moving to full day kindergarten. The RI General Assembly enacted the Rhode Island's Full Day Kindergarten Accessibility Act (H 8049) which provides for one-time state start-up funding to support districts that intend to open, operate, and sustain new full day kindergarten classrooms. RIDE will approve grants for up to four eligible public school districts per year. The proposal submission deadline is **November 1, 2013**. For more information and to download a copy of the Request for Proposals, go to: [www.ride.ri.gov/Early-Childhood](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Early-Childhood) .

### **8. Rhode Island joins consortium to develop Kindergarten Entry Assessments**

The U.S. Department of Education has announced the award of more than \$15.1 million in Enhanced Assessment Grants (EAGs) to develop or enhance Kindergarten Entry Assessments (KEA). Rhode Island joined a consortium of states lead by North Carolina and including Arizona, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington D.C. and South Carolina to apply for the grant, and received a grant award of more than \$6.1 million. It will be used to support the collaborative efforts of the states to develop, pilot, and evaluate a new KEA as well as designing technological supports and teacher training.

The consortium partners will work together to plan for, develop, and pilot a comprehensive assessment tool to inform teachers and administrators of the status of incoming kindergarten students. Their work will be informed by national experts with a national perspective, as well as stakeholders throughout the state of Rhode Island. The final assessment tool will align with the recently adopted Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards and the Common Core State Standards. The efforts under this new grant align with the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge goals of developing a KEA that will further advance statewide efforts to help parents, teachers, and school districts understand what children know and are able to do when they enter kindergarten.

The consortium partners will have their launch meeting in November 2013 and plan to begin piloting assessment items during the 2014-2015 academic year, with a full assessment pilot planned for September, 2015. Statewide field testing of the assessment will begin in September of 2016.

For more information on the consortium or plans for development of the KEA, please contact Judi Stevenson-Garcia at RIDE. [Judi.stevenson-garcia@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Judi.stevenson-garcia@ride.ri.gov).

### ***Educator Evaluations:***

#### **9. Video highlights Rhode Island educators experience implementing Student Learning Objectives**

In this short video, several Rhode Island educators reflect on their experiences with the first full year of implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in their classrooms and schools. In their own words, educators describe challenges, reflect on lessons learned, and articulate what they see as the benefits of this process. Educators can access the video on the RIDE website at [www.ride.ri.gov/SLOs](http://www.ride.ri.gov/SLOs).

#### **10. SLO Quality Review Tool available on RIDE website**

The *SLO Quality Review Tool* was developed to help educators and evaluators effectively review and revise SLOs. The one-page tool includes guiding questions for each component of an SLO (e.g., priority of content, rigor of target, quality of evidence) to help determine whether or not that section is acceptable or in need of revision. The *SLO Quality Review Tool* is the same resource that members of the educator evaluation team at RIDE have been using as part of the in-district SLO Calibration Workshops. To date, seven districts have worked with RIDE to facilitate an SLO Calibration Workshop and the feedback on the *SLO Quality Review Tool* has been overwhelmingly positive, and some districts have decided to use the tool with their teachers as well.

Educators can access the *SLO Quality Review Tool* under the “Resources” tab on the RIDE website at [www.ride.ri.gov/SLOs](http://www.ride.ri.gov/SLOs).

#### **11. New resources added to the Assessment Toolkit – *Protocols for Analyzing and Scoring Student Work***

This *Protocols for Analyzing and Scoring Student Work* tool contains two elements, the first being the Student Work Analysis Protocol. Engaging in this protocol can help reveal students' understanding of concepts and skills and can help educators make instructional decisions for improving student learning. The second protocol provides a process for educators to use to calibrate their scoring of student work. This tool can be used by teacher teams when scoring student work, such as baseline data used to inform targets for SLOs or student work used as evidence for SLOs. It is accompanied by several sets of student work samples from various subject areas. These can be used in conjunction with the protocol as a training exercise to familiarize scorers with the calibration process. The Assessment Toolkit is available on the RIDE website at [www.ride.ri.gov/EdEval-OnlineModules](http://www.ride.ri.gov/EdEval-OnlineModules).

### ***Certification:***

#### **12. Certification Office Update**

All certification renewal requests for certificates expiring August 31, 2013 have been processed and reviewed. You can verify certification issuance by visiting the Educator Verification Portal- <http://ecert.ride.ri.gov/public/>. The office continues to work on requests for new certifications. Please continue to contact us at [egac@ride.ri.gov](mailto:egac@ride.ri.gov) if you need to prioritize a request to make a hiring decision.

### ***Health and Safety:***

#### **13. Guidance for Implementation of CPR Training**

During the 2013 Legislative Session, *An Act Relating to Education – Curriculum – CPR Training* ([H 5376](#); [S 318](#)) was enacted establishing minimum standards for CPR training in RI public schools (*This shall at a minimum include psychomotor skill-based CPR training and an overview of automated external defibrillator [AED] use for all high school students prior to graduation*). RIDE, in consultation with the Department of Health, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program – Emergency Medical Services Work Group and the American Heart Association, has developed guidance for the implementation of CPR training for RI public high school students. The following guidance document outlines several ways that the

new requirement can be implemented: [Guidance for Implementation of CPR Training Law \(2013\)](#)

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

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