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Friday, October 7, 2016**

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October 14 – Presidential [Scholars](#) nominees due

October 14 – [Dyslexia](#) survey due

October 24: Facilities-assessment surveys due (see [below](#))

October 25: [October 1 Data Snapshot, Demographics and duplicates NEED to be zero - Due](#)

October 28: [October 1 Enrollment Census Submission & Snapshot Reports - Due](#)

[December 9 – Textbook-verification forms due \(see below\)](#)

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. RIDE receives proposals for new, expanded charters

In response to our request for proposals, RIDE has received a number of applications to open new charter public schools or to expand enrollment in existing charters. We have begun the review of the proposals received by the required deadline.

Recently there have been stories in the media about the expansion request submitted to RIDE by the Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy.

The majority of Achievement First students reside in the Providence school district, and we recognize that the teachers in Providence are dedicated professionals who love their students and want what's best for them. We need to support and empower teachers in district schools, as well as the students and families who work with educators each day to advance teaching and learning.

Yet we are also aware that almost 15,000 children who live in Providence are enrolled in a struggling school identified, as required by state and federal law, for intensive intervention.

Many families in Providence remain on waiting lists to enroll their children in charter public schools and private schools. Last year, I met with a group of parents who created a year-long prayer group asking for one thing: success for their children in a charter lottery.

While we work together to improve student outcomes in Providence district schools, we also need to make sure that those who ask for choice have options, including high-quality career and technical

education (CTE) programs, dual and concurrent early college enrollment opportunities, and public charter schools.

We will review the Achievement First and all other proposals in this context, consistent with the law.

The period for public comment on [all requests for new charters and charter expansions](#) opened last Friday and remains open through November 29.

2. Startup Weekend leads to innovative ideas for education

Last week the Highlander Institute convened a Startup Weekend Education in Providence to bring together teams of educators, developers, designers, and entrepreneurs to put their heads together and develop ideas to solve problems in education. The result?: the launch of five education startups. Read about it in this report on [Edsurge](#): “Desperately Seeking: Culturally relevant ideas and innovation in education.”

3. R.I. school leaders receive awards from regional association

Last month the New England Association of School Superintendents (NEASS) held its 199th Annual Fall Conference in Newport. The conference theme was “Social-Emotional Learning and the new ESSA: Current State of Research, Policy, and Practice.” The Co-Presidents of NEASS, Roy Seitsinger of Westerly and Mario Andrade of Bristol Warren, presented these awards to Rhode Island school leaders:

- the NEASS President’s Award, to Rosemarie Kraeger, Superintendent of the Middletown Schools for the past 19 years;
- the Alice Duckworth Achievement in Education Award, to Arthur Campbell, who served as Superintendent of the South Kingstown

Schools from 1984 to 1996 and as the executive director of the Rhode Island School Superintendents' Association from 1996 to 2006; and

- the Lincoln Lynch Career Achievement Award, to Dr. Timothy P. Ryan, Executive Director of the Rhode Island School Superintendents' Association and a past-Superintendent in Portsmouth.

Congratulations to Rosemary, Arthur, and Tim on achieving these distinctions.

4. RIDE to release 2016 school classifications on Wednesday

We have posted on District Exchange server information about the 2016 school classifications. As was the practice last year, for 2016 we will classify only Commended, Focus, and Priority Schools, with all other schools receiving no classification. Additionally, however, some schools will receive an "alert," signifying either a low graduation rate or a low participation rate on state assessments.

You can review information about 2016 classifications of schools in your LEA by using the District Exchange to access your "Accountability 2016" folder. You may share this information with your principals.

The 2016 classifications are based on Composite Index Scores that comprise measures of student proficiency (in English language arts and mathematics), gap closing, student growth, and (for high schools) graduation rates.

We will release the 2016 classifications publicly on **Wednesday** (October 12) at 9 a.m. Please keep your 2016 school classifications confidential until the public release on Wednesday morning.

From RIDE

School Safety:

5. School districts to conduct school-safety assessments this year; EMA, State Police provide guidance document

In 2013 the General Assembly passed [legislation](#) mandating that “each school district of each town, city, and regional school department conduct a school-safety assessment in conjunction with local police, fire, school-safety teams ... and any other expert said school department deems necessary.” The assessments are to examine the current safety status of each school building. The initial assessment was to be completed in 2013 and school districts are to conduct a new assessment every three (3) years thereafter. Therefore, under provisions of this act, you are required to conduct a school-safety assessment this year.

To help you with this process, the Emergency Management Agency, the State Police, and local, state, and federal partners have prepared the “All Hazards Site Safety Survey Report 2016,” which provides a standardized approach to conducting school-safety assessments.

We encourage you to use this document in planning your safety assessment, and we have posted the document on our website, at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Health-Safety/2016_School_Assessment.docx

Educators:

6. RIDE to hold first R.I. Teacher to Teacher conference on October 29

On October 29, RIDE will host the first “Rhode Island Teacher to Teacher Conference: Opening Doors for Innovation and Collaboration,” at Lincoln Middle School, 152 Jenckes Hill Rd. This conference will be an opportunity for teachers across the state to learn about successful classroom practices from colleagues. The entire conference will be presented by Rhode Island educators and will be for Rhode Island educators to share innovative practices currently being used in our schools. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn from fellow Rhode Island educators about effective and innovative practices at a variety of grade levels and from various content areas. Guest speakers include Commissioner Wagner and 2017 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year, Nikos Giannopoulos.

To register for the event, please visit <http://rit2t.eventbrite.com> Registration includes a light breakfast and lunch. If you have any questions or would like more information about the conference, please email Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov .

To learn more about the specific sessions offered, please click here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L4ieG6ajXz6xfHSann1MB5O3z3KDTFrZ04IbqMIXyZQ/edit?usp=sharing>

For a brochure with specific session times and schedule, please click here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8SQxp067vUsODI1Szd4QzcyMXc/view?usp=sharing>.

7. R.I. principals participate in program on leadership, blended learning

Earlier this year a cohort of 35 Rhode Island school leaders participated in the Rhode Island Association of School Principals Leadership in Blended and Digital Learning program for building principal capacity across the state. “I’m excited, I’m rejuvenated, I’m modeling, I’m sharing, and we’re learning together with the teachers,” said Colleen Mercurio, principal at Cedar Hill Elementary School, in Warwick. Read more about the program [here](#).

8. RIDE posts full application packet on leadership-development grants; deadline November 18

The application materials for leadership-development grants are now available at this [link](#) on the RIDE website. The deadline for submission of applications is **November 18**. This is a reminder that the Letters of Intent (the first step in the submission process) are due on **October 14** by 4 p.m.

For further information about this leadership-development opportunity, email Alexis Meyer, Leadership Fellow at RIDE, at alexis.meyer@ride.ri.gov.

Instruction:

9. Meetings scheduled for public feedback on personalized learning

Along with the Office of Innovation, the Highlander Institute, the Rhode Island Mayoral Academies, the Rhode Island Association of School Principals, and others, RIDE has helped to produce a draft [white paper](#) defining personalized learning and discussing its possibilities in Rhode Island and areas of potential focus to get us closer to a more personalized, student-centered approach to learning.

The Office of Innovation, in collaboration with the other white paper co-signers, will hold two community meetings to update stakeholders on the contents of the draft and to solicit feedback on it from the broader Rhode Island community. We encourage you to attend, and please help us spread the word!

The meetings will be held on:

- **Thursday** (October 13), 4:30-6 p.m., at the Pawtucket Library Auditorium ([RSVP here](#))
- **Tuesday**, November 15, 4:30-6 p.m., Location TBD ([RSVP here](#))

Finance:

10. RIDE requests reimbursement for nonpublic-school textbooks forms by December 9 – *Action Item*

Provided that LEAs have complied with all requests from nonpublic-school students per RIGL 16-23-1 to 16-23-8, LEAs will be reimbursed for any English language arts, history, or social studies textbooks on the approved textbook list for grades Kindergarten through 12. To process this reimbursement, you must complete the [FY2016-2017 Textbook Verification Form](#). This form must be submitted by Friday, **December 9**. A single FY2017 payment will be made in the February 2017 aid payment. Any inquiries regarding reimbursements should be directed to Kristen Cole, at 222-4681.

Schools:

11. RIDE accepting public comment, schedules public hearings on proposed new charters, charter expansions

Requests for new charter applications and existing charter expansions are now undergoing the formal process of recording public comment.

All interested parties are invited to participate in the public hearings and submit written comments regarding the proposed requests through **November 29**. Written public comments may be made by emailing richarters@ride.ri.gov or faxing 222-3465.

In addition, the schedule for public hearings will be posted by the close of business today at this link:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/studentsfamilies/ripublicschools/charterschools.aspx#1977600-charter-school-proposals-under-review>

Please keep in mind that the exclusive purpose of these public hearings is to receive public comment on requests for new charter applications and requests for existing charter expansions; public hearings are not opportunities to provide information to the public.

The hearing locations are accessible to those with disabilities, and interpreter services for those with hearing impairment will be provided if requested 48 hours before the hearing. Requests for this service can be made by emailing richarters@ride.ri.gov or by calling RI Relay, at (800) 745-5555,,or RIDE, at 222-3465.

School Construction:

12. Statewide facilities-assessment data ready for review; feedback due October 24 – *Action Item*

Over the last several months, the School Building Authority at RIDE has been conducting a comprehensive condition assessment of LEA facilities across the state. We are pleased to report that the assessment team walk-throughs have been completed and that, last month your team had an opportunity to provide feedback on the first round of facility-conditions data. Additional data, including an energy assessment and an updated conditions assessment with costs, are

ready for your review. At this point all LEAs have the opportunity to collaborate in the process to help ensure useful and accurate data.

Please review and provide feedback using the following steps:

Follow [the link to the RIDEmap website](#) and log in for access to your LEA facilities data. If you have an issue logging, in please contact Mario Goncalves, at mario.goncalves@ride.ri.gov or 222-8968.

Once in RIDEmap, go to the District Exchange district folder and select “Facility Conditions Data” Folder

Inside that folder, please review the PDF file named “LEA_Condition Data Review” for items that are identified for repair or replacement in your facilities and the PDF file named “LEA_Energy Assessment Report DRAFT” for an energy analysis and energy-conservation measures for your facilities.

For an overview of both reports, please feel free to review the “LEA Condition & Energy Data Overview.”

Provide feedback and comments via the [web survey linked here](#) by **October 24.**

Because we understand that your staff is busy, the survey is a brief online questionnaire designed to allow you to provide as much feedback as you deem necessary. If you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to reach Dr. Joseph da Silva, at 222-4294 or joseph.dasilva@ride.ri.gov. Thank you for all of the cooperation you and your staff have provided during this assessment process.

Council on Elementary and Secondary Education:

13. Council to meet on Tuesday (October 11)

The next scheduled meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education will take place on **Tuesday** (October 11), at 5:30 p.m., in Room 501 at RIDE (80 Washington St./255 Westminster St.). The Council is scheduled to vote on approved or revised Secondary School regulations (including graduation requirements). We post Council [agendas](#) on our website.

Scholarships:

14. High-school students encouraged to apply for U.S. Senate Youth Program; deadline, October 24

We would like to let you know about the 55th Annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP). This is an important scholarship opportunity for your outstanding junior and senior high-school students interested in pursuing careers in public service. To qualify students must currently be serving in an elected capacity in a student organization for the 2016-17 school year. The following are eligible roles:

- Student-body president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer;
- Class president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
- Student Council representative; and
- Student representative elected or appointed (by a panel, commission, or board) to a local, district, regional, or state-level civic, service or educational organization approved by the state selection administrator .

All fifty states offer this program, and Rhode Island has participated for many years. Each state selects two students to represent them in

Washington, D.C. from March 4 – 11, 2017, where the students interact with elected officials and other individuals in top government positions. Each selected student will also be awarded a ten-thousand dollar (\$10,000) scholarship. In addition, two alternate students will be selected and receive a five-hundred dollar (\$500) college scholarship. The students we have selected to represent Rhode Island have consistently reported that they enjoyed a unique and valuable educational experience. All of the details on how to qualify and apply for the program can be found on the RIDE website:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/AdditionalResources/StudentScholarships.aspx#timeline>.

Please note that the deadline for students to submit their completed applications and all supporting documents is Tuesday, **October 24**. If you have any questions about this program, please contact Colleen Brophy at 222-4275 or Colleen.brophy@ride.ri.gov. For more information, please visit <http://ussenateyouth.org/>. <http://ussenateyouth.org/> <http://ussenateyouth.org/> This program can greatly benefit your students, and we hope that you will encourage them to apply.

15. *Reminder: LEAs asked to nominate high-school seniors for Presidential Scholar award by October 14 – Action Item*

We are seeking from all Rhode Island high schools nominations of students to be named as 2017 Presidential Scholars. We encourage you to work with your high-school principals and to select one male student and one female student from each high school as your nominees for this award. Here are the criteria, as set forth by the U.S. Department of Education:

We encourage you to nominate students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship but who *might not otherwise be*

nominated through the current SAT/ACT, Arts, or CTE recognition processes. All high-school seniors graduating between January and June of 2017 who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and who attend public, parochial, or independent schools, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible. The candidates will go through the application process, and, as in the past, the 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, D.C.

It may be helpful to consider the following questions as you contemplate the selection of your nominees:

- What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?
- *Were there special challenges or hurdles this student has overcome while still achieving high academic success?*

In addition, it may be useful for you to know that the reviewers will be considering the following categories when evaluating the nominees at the semifinalist and Scholar evaluation levels:

- involvement and Service (in school and community);
- leadership and character;
- writing samples;
- academic achievements; and
- *discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.*

Each student you nominate should prepare an application that includes:

- his or her resume, including home mailing address;
- a letter of reference from you or a school official that explains how the student stands out as having outstanding scholarship; and
- a brief (approximately 500 to 750 words) essay that responds to this question: “What special challenges or hurdles have you overcome while still achieving high academic success?”

Please also submit this information for each student you nominate:

- Student’s name
- Student’s home mailing address
- Student’s gender
- Student’s personal email address
- High-school name and mailing address
- High-school CEEB code

We remind you that this last point is particularly important to this nomination process, as these nominations will recognize students who would not be considered for this award based solely on their academic achievement.

Either you or your high-school principal(s) will be our contact in this process. We ask either you or your principals (not the nominated students) to submit your nominations to Lauren McCarthy (lauren.mccarthy@ride.ri.gov) by **October 14** .

From nominations we receive, we will select up to 20 nominees from Rhode Island (up to 10 male students, 10 female students). We will notify you when we have submitted nominations to the Presidential Scholars Commission, but you will not hear further from us on the nominations.

The Commission will select finalists early next year, and Scholars will be announced in the spring. Scholars will receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. For more information about the program, see:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html>

From the U.S. Department of Education (USED)

16. Reports published on education statistics, national education systems

The USED announces the publication to two recent education reports:

The NCES “[Projections of Education Statistics to 2024](#)” provides national data on enrollment, graduates, teachers, and expenditures at the elementary- and secondary-education level and enrollment and degrees at the postsecondary level for the past 15 years and projections to year 2024.

“[Education at a Glance](#),” the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development annual report, compares education systems in 35 member countries using a range of indicators, such as student participation and achievement, public and private spending, conditions for students and educators, and the state of lifelong learning ([blog post](#)).

From other organizations

17. Summit scheduled for November 15 on health-career education in R.I. schools

The healthcare industry is the largest employer in Rhode Island. In an effort to fill the high-demand jobs in this industry, research shows that we must begin to develop the pipeline in early school years.

Specialized skills and most often a bachelor's degree are required to fill anticipated vacancies and meet healthcare-industry needs. The response of schools to these demands requires a new and focused effort with increased academic rigor in science and math, soft skills, and early exposure to and experience within the healthcare field.

The [Advancing Health Career Education in Rhode Island Schools Summit](#) is designed specifically for middle-school and high-school mathematics teachers, science teachers, guidance counselors, and school principals. Health-industry leaders and experts will share current information regarding the following topics:

- High-demand healthcare career opportunities;
- The skills and educational pathways required for success in these roles, including curriculum pathways;
- Specific pedagogies and skills that can be taught and integrated immediately into real classroom settings; and
- Mentorship, internship, immersion practices that have shown promise in preparing students for successful college and career pathways in healthcare.

Healthcare employers and practice partners will be at this event to begin the dialog that fosters important and necessary connections and relationships between schools and healthcare providers.

[Come and learn about how you can participate in making a career in healthcare become a reality for students!](#)

Advancing Health Career Education in R.I. Schools Summit

Tuesday, **November 15**

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick

Breakfast and registration begins at 7:45 a.m.

Program begins at 8:30 a.m.

The Advancing Health Career Education in Rhode Island Schools Summit is hosted by the [Rhode Island Action Coalition \(RIAC\)](#)

with support from the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), [Care New England Health System](#), and the [Rhode Island Nurses Institute Charter High School](#).

18. Registration open for Winter Standards Institute 2017

We are excited to announce that registration for the [Winter Standards Institute 2017](#) in Orlando (February 13 – 17) is now open! Our Institute is an intensive and transformative content-based learning experience designed to improve, build, and sustain instructional excellence for teachers and school leaders in math, ELA, and leadership. This is an opportunity for a community of practitioners to think critically about instructional practices, get smarter about standards-aligned research and materials, and learn how to confront the challenges of meeting high standards with all students. New this winter, we are offering learning pathways for both **first-time attendees** and for **returning attendees**. To register, click [here](#).

19. Registration opens for RIASCD pre-service, beginning teachers' conference

Save the date for the [Fourteenth Annual Pre-Service and Beginning Teachers' Conference](#):

Date: **November 19**

Time: 8 a.m.–1 p.m.

Location: Johnston Senior High School 345 Cherry Hill Rd.

The registration fee is \$30 and includes breakfast and a year's membership to RIASCD.

Pre-service (Practicum and Student Teaching) from Salve, URI, RIC, RWU, PC, Brown, J & W, and RISD and Beginning Teachers (defined as anyone in the practice for five years or under) from around the state are invited to attend this conference. Participants will receive a professional-development credit report; a free student membership in RIASCD, "the organization for excellence in teaching and learning"; and opportunities to take away great resources supplied by local practitioners and ASCD. Most important, participants will have the opportunity to network with members of a professional organization.

Participants will have the opportunity to select breakout sessions from among a variety of topics.

If you have Student Teachers or Beginning Teachers in your buildings or know of any pre-service or beginning educators, please spread the word.

Registration materials are live at www.RIASCD.org.

Certificates of Completion will be provided.

Please also save the date for the [RIASCD Author Forum](#) on Thursday, **November 19**, at the Radisson (Warwick). This year's forum focus will be on Open Education Resources. Keynote speaker will be Mary Ann Snider, Deputy Commissioner at RIDE.

20. Teachers, students invited to participation in Great Thanksgiving Listen oral-history project

[StoryCorps](#), the pioneering oral history nonprofit, invites Rhode Island students to make history this Thanksgiving with [The Great Thanksgiving Listen](#). Now in its second year, the project empowers high-school students across America to record a conversation with an elder over the holiday weekend.

Using the free StoryCorps app, students are able to archive their stories in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. This is a great opportunity for students to learn about history from first-hand accounts and to connect with members of older generations by engaging in meaningful discussions.

To participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen, teachers can join the StoryCorps [teacher newsletter](#) and the [StoryCorps in the Classroom](#) Facebook group. The teacher toolkit is available [here](#) for in-class activities and curriculum tie-ins. Additionally, to arrange a free professional development workshop for teachers in your district, email mwitenberg@storycorps.org.

21. RIC to hold conference on resiliency on November 5

We are pleased to invite you to attend the 2016 Promising Practices Conference held at Rhode Island College on Saturday, **November 5**. The theme of the conference, “Resilience Across the Board: A Strength-Based Approach to Foster Resiliency in All Communities” will feature best practices, emerging ideas, and current research for developing, nurturing, and sustaining resiliency in individuals and communities. Cultivating resiliency improves quality of life, health and human outcomes, learning, and life success.

The conference planners are pleased to announce the keynote speaker, Dr. Robert Brooks, a well-respected clinical psychologist and expert in the area of resilience. Dr. Brooks will focus on strategies to enhance

resiliency in individuals and communities. Dr. Brooks has presented in a variety of venues across the U.S .and abroad. He will speak to the development of resilience offering realistic and practical strategies.

A selection of conference workshops will be offered in two sessions that focus on the role resiliency represents in achieving success. Attendees will select one workshop in each session. A luncheon at Donovan Dining Center is included.

The cost of the conference is \$20 for general admission and \$15 for students. Registration is open and accessible through the RIC Promising Practices website:

<http://www.ric.edu/promisingpractices/>

or directly at (copy and paste in your web browser):

<https://commerce.cashnet.com/cashnetk/selfserve/EditItem.aspx?PC=PP-REGISTER&ItemCount=1>

Student scholarships are available. You will need to email Dr. Carol Cummings (ccummings@ric.edu) for further inquiry.

If you require disability-related accommodations for this conference email Carol Cummings or Clair Creamer (CCREAMER@RIC.EDU) 5 days before the event at minimum.

For further information or questions, please email Carol Cummings or Clair Creamer, Dialogue on Diversity Promising Practices Conference Co-Chairs.

22. Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund 20167 Poster Contest announces new awards structure

The Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund 2017 Poster Contests for middle schools and high schools have been modified. We will have first place and second place at both school levels and an increase in the prize money awarded:

High school: first place \$1,000 and second place \$500

Middle school: first place \$500 and Second Place \$250

Rules and registration forms can be found on our website: www.labmf.org

23. Writing workshops for students, teachers scheduled

[Write Rhode Island: A Writing Competition for Students](#) has scheduled additional workshops for students.

The Warwick Public Library is hosting creative writing workshop for students on **Tuesday** (October 11) at 6 p.m. Contact the teen librarian to sign up at 739-5440 x 6 or teenspace@warwicklibrary.org.

The Westerly Public Library is hosting a writing workshop for teens as part of its YA events in October; a short-story workshop will be held on **Thursday** (October 13), at 6 p.m. Contact Kelsey, at 596-2877 or kmatthews@westerlylibrary.org.

The Providence Public Library will be presenting “On The Rhode,” a three-part workshop that offers an introduction to short fiction for teens in grades 8 through 12. Saturdays: October 15, 22, and 29, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Contact Shannon at Providence Public Library, or register at www.provlib.org/teenRegistration.

Last chance for teachers to sign up for a workshop at Barnes & Noble, Warwick

**Write Rhode Island: A Writing Competition for Students: Workshop
For Educators With Author Taylor Polites**

Taylor Polites, School One, Goat Hill Special Event, **on** Wednesday (October 12), at 6 p.m.

Contact Katie at Barnes & Noble, Warwick, to sign up; the workshop is free but registration is required.

Write Rhode Island is a short-story competition presented by School One and Goat Hill. Students, grades 8 to 12, can submit one story that incorporates Rhode Island. Winners will receive a cash prize, get their work published or exhibited and participate in a statewide reading. This workshop is for educators to learn how to incorporate this program into their classroom and share this opportunity with students.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

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