



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
October 3, 2022

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair DiCenso welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. She declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 5:34p.m.

Present: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam,
*Charles Curci, Patricia DiCenso,

Absent: Joe Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the October 3, 2022, meeting

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Patricia DiCenso,

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion duly made by Michael Almeida and seconded by Mary Barden, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary approve the minutes of the September 14, 2022, meeting

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members

voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,
Barbara Cottam, Patricia DiCenso, Marta Martinez,

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

(Members Cottam, Beretta, and Gaines recused herself as she did not attend the September 14 meeting)

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green welcomed everyone and began her report by addressing the "WaterFire: Celebrating Educational Excellence" event which brought together hundreds of education professionals, students, families, state and local leaders, and community members from around Rhode Island to celebrate the incredible work of our educators. She expressed how humbled she was to be amongst the best Rhode Island has to offer. She added that having everyone together was a reminder of how lucky RIDE is to have so many individuals dedicated to helping our students succeed. Commissioner Infante-Green thanked the North Providence High School and the North Kingstown High School DECA students who volunteered their time. She thanked the North Kingstown High School CTE Pre-Engineering students who made personalized 3-D educator keychains for each awardee and the North Providence High School marching band and concert choir for entertaining our guests. She thanked the PCTA cosmetology students who donated their time and talent by providing face painting, hair styling and manicures as well as the PCTA graphic design team for all the printed materials, banners, and volunteer t-shirts. She also thanked the CTE and High School culinary arts students for catering delicious food which was a highlight of the afternoon. Commissioner Infante-Green gave a special thank you to Mary Keenan, whose organization and passion for celebrating and elevating our educators remains a highlight of the agency. She highlighted the XQ+RI teachers' lounge, where guests had the chance to design custom tote bags, contribute ideas for reimagining the high school experience, and learn how to stay involved.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green shared that tonight, RIDE will bring the final proposal to adopt Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements to the Council, adding that RIDE will share a summary of the public comment received on the proposal, and the changes that have been made. She also announced that RIDE will also share the extensive, historic community engagement conducted to develop and revise this proposal. She noted that student groups, superintendents, educators, families, community leaders, and more were engaged to represent Rhode Island.

Commissioner Infante-Green continued her report speaking on the chance to make unprecedented investments to transform school facilities with the results from the polls in November. She shared that RIDE has over \$1.3 billion on local ballots to build new schools throughout our state. If passed, the funding will help projects that include new High Schools in Warwick, Pawtucket, and Middletown. A new Martin Middle School in East Providence and a new elementary school in North Providence, Westerly, and Middletown. These bonds are in addition to a second \$250 million Statewide School construction bond up for consideration. She added that Providence has a \$125 million bond up for consideration as well as part of a half a billion-dollar school construction plan.

Finally, Commissioner Infante-Green took a moment to recognize Hispanic Heritage Month which runs from September 15th through October 15th. She noted that she visited Gilbert Stuart Middle School in Providence, where they have displayed influential Latinos in U.S. History in the entry way, hallways, and classrooms. She encouraged all schools to highlight these contributions. She added that as the first woman of color, first generation Latina Commissioner of Education, she thanked educators and administrators who remind the students to be proud of their heritage and embrace the diversity we are so fortunate to have in our Rhode Island education system. She also noted that October is also Dyslexia Awareness Month, where here in Rhode Island and across the country we are taking the time to raise awareness and share tools to increase better reading skills. She added that the RIDE website highlights support and resources for dyslexia and related disorders to help educators and families to work together to better support students who struggle with reading, writing, and math. These resources include videos, presentations and more.

4. OPEN FORUM

Ten individuals addressed the Council and 7 individuals sent written comments.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Attendance & CTE Update - PPSD Update

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting to Superintendent Montanez to frame the discussion. Superintendent Montanez thanked everyone for the opportunity to provide a PPSD update. He explained that the team would be providing an attendance and CTE update. Superintendent Montanez introduced Sandra Stuart, Chief of Student Supports, Marc Catone, Director of Student Supports, and Stephen Grace, District Culture Specialist to discuss attendance. Brett Dickens, CTE Director of Providence Schools, Donna O'Conner, Director of Nursing, PE & Health, Nestor Puello, CTE Law & Public Safety Teacher at Central and Chief Kevin Dolan, Providence Fire Department to discuss the CTE update. Marc Catone began the PPSD update by providing an attendance intervention and strategy update. Due to their outreach the number of visitors to the PPSD website for all subject matters and back to school page increased significantly. Mr. Catone added that through the outreach they also received reported reasons for non-attendance, which was mainly due to student illness and vacation. Stephen Grace also reported that all schools have

set up an attendance team that they are currently meeting with to focus on protocols and structures. The attendance interventions that are put in place include additional restorative attendance mentors, attendance letters and an attendance academy. The attendance academy will create tools and resources to support intervention and incentives.

Next, Brett Dickens began by providing a brief overview of the new programs in Providence. She spoke on transforming CTE in public schools with quality, growth, and work-based learning. She addressed all the schools in Providence that provide CTE including PCTA, Hope, Mt. Pleasant, Central, JSEC, E-Cubed, and Alvarez. These CTE programs have seen a 22% enrollment growth, WBL, and credential bundle completion. The CTE programs also have new programs at certain locations, these include Healthcare Pathways, Firefighter program, and After-Hours General Construction. The outcomes for summer 2022 in these CTE programs include 121 students at PCTA and Central with 30 students completing 100 paid internships with outside companies. The paid internships were comprised of a pitch grant, one Providence grant and payment from companies. Ms. Dickens turned the meeting to Donna O'Conner. Ms. O'Conner addressed her excitement in the CNA and EMT, and Community Healthcare Worker pathways and providing the opportunity to students. Next Nestor Puello and Chief Kevin Dolan reported an update on the new Firefighter program at Central and discussed the courses which include Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2 and the Emergency Medical Technician courses. He noted that a quarter of the attendees were female students.

Commissioner Infante-Green commented that she was able to go out and see the firefighter class in action and was very impressed.

Next, Joe Caparco discussed the After-Hours General Construction at PCTA and explained that the school year program includes 18 overage/under credited students from A-Venture and Central High School. The program is 160 hours of training occurring on Tuesday nights for 4 hours. Students also receive 10 days at LiUNA's training facility in Hopkinton and a preferential interview for LiUNA apprenticeship.

b. FY 2024 Budget

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner for Instructional Programs, Lisa Odom-Villella to begin the discussion. Deputy Commissioner Odom-Villella introduced RIDE's Chief Finance Officer, Mark Dunham.

Mr. Dunham began by providing general information which includes the FY 2023 revised budget includes two requests in the state aid for additional funds. \$580K for Davies Career & Tech to cover transportation costs and \$2.8M for ten LEAs that received less funds through the formula than initially anticipated causing budget deficiencies in approved budgets. He added that the proposed FY 2024 budget request includes a general revenue increase of \$59.2M, the largest increase is \$83.1M in education aid. Various reductions, the largest, \$35M in Housing Aid have reduced the overall comparative increase amount.

Mr. Dunham continued with the RIDE staffing highlights in the FY24 budget request which include 7 FTEs allocated to school systems support and closing equity gaps, a multi-language learner specialist, a transformation specialist, a data researcher for assessment data, two education specialists, a network administrator, and a finance specialist. He discussed additional new initiatives that include expanding the teacher workforce and increasing student success factors in the education aid funding formula to drive additional funding to the neediest LEAs. Mr. Dunham provided an overview of the State Aid to education regarding the funding formula and categorical aid. He also discussed the FY 2024 requested budget for all RIDE departments and all funding sources used. He noted the allocation of education funds was 98% distributed to the LEAs and 2% maintained at RIDE. Mr. Dunham concluded his presentation explaining the COVID -19 relief funds.

Member Callahan was interested to know if RIDE had data to show where the COVID monies were being spent.

Mr. Dunham explained that they can obtain specifics if needed, however receipts are not checked. He added that the UCOA data will further explain the line items that were spent on. The Commissioner explained that the districts allocated in their plans what they would be spending. Member Beretta and Callahan requested to see a report on the funding expenses. Commissioner Infante-Green added that there have been reports circulating that the money has not been spent and explained that districts will be reviewing recent data to further spend the money that is available. Member Callahan wanted to clarify that her request was to see where investments were made and how to support that. Member Beretta wanted to ensure that the money was spent appropriately. Commissioner Infante-Green added that Brown had conducted a study on ESSER I and II and that the report would be available to the Council.

c. 21st Century Technology & Equipment Fund

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner, Lisa Odom-Villella to frame the discussion. Deputy Commissioner Odom-Villella introduced RIDE's Chief Operating Officer Mario Carreno.

Mr. Carreno began by discussing the background and need for 21st century technology and equipment. He explained that to support our districts, RIDE has created the 21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund, which will be focused on STEM and CTE programs during the inaugural year. He noted that this program leverages \$1.1M in existing CTE categorical funding with SBA Capital funds to infuse \$15M dollars directly into the classroom to support teaching and learning. He continued to add that unlike new school construction projects, this fund targets investments that offer an immediate transformative effect to thousands of Rhode Island students. Like the ARTS initiative distribution, every LEA would be eligible for funding on a per student basis, with a minimum award of \$25,000. To help remove barriers and meet the needs of all learners, the distribution uses a new equity boost to provide additional funding to the least

affluent communities. Additionally, he noted that the CTE categorical funds provide a CTE boost to the 10 LEAs that qualify.

Mr. Carreno provided an overview of the top recipients and noted that all funds must be used by June 30, 2023.

d. Secondary Regulations

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting to RIDE's State Strategy and Student Opportunity Officer Stephen Osborn.

Mr. Osborn began by sharing the updated proposal to reimagine high school and adopt Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements. He explained that this presentation is the culmination of nearly 18 months of extensive engagement and intentional collaboration. The goal of every conversation has been to develop a system where we graduate all our kids with open doors to create their future. He added that this proposal will make that vision a reality for every single child in Rhode Island. He mentioned that the packet this evening includes an updated version of the redlined regulations, a clean version of the proposed updated regulations, a summary of public comment and RIDE's rationale for responding, a summary of the proposed revisions, and an admissions v. graduation requirement comparison chart. The updated proposal being reviewed tonight is guided by the feedback from each member of the K-12 Council Subcommittee on Secondary Regulations.

Mr. Osborn turned the meeting to Chair DiCenso. Chair DiCenso explained the need for creating a subcommittee on Secondary Regulations. She noted that the Chair of the K-12 Council can appoint k-12 Council members to serve on a subcommittee to carry out the work of the Council. She explained that the subcommittee wanted to read all comments provided and to ensure all voices were heard. She wanted to acknowledge the fact that support is needed for implementation. She explained the agenda and all issues and items that were discussed in each meeting. She noted that RIDE was here this evening to provide an updated revised proposal for Readiness Based Graduation requirements. Chair DiCenso turned the meeting to Mr. Osborn

Mr. Osborn explained that the formal public comment process began on March 7th. RIDE hosted seven public hearings, four town halls, and met with anyone who offered their time. Mr. Osborn provided a summary of all the meetings and noted that the secondary regulations were the most commented-on set of regulations in the history of K-12 education in Rhode Island, receiving 433 public comments in total. He continued to add that RIDE focused on engaging all stakeholders. He thanked everyone who helped RIDE understand their experiences. He provided a breakdown of public comments and addressed college and career readiness alignment and added that the updated language in the proposal responds to public comment received related to world language, career and technical education, college alignment, and special education. He noted that the team had learned about what RI wants for its kids and how they want to achieve it, adding

that the goal has been to understand all perspectives and to make sure they are reflected in the final version of the regulations.

Mr. Osborn welcomed a handful of partners to share their experience partnering with RIDE to support the efforts to reimagine high school and the secondary regulations to speak and provide their personal experiences. These individuals were Charles Curci, High School Sr. at Johnston High School, and Student Advisory Council Representative on the K-12 Council. Maddy Rodrigues, Mount Hope High School Class of 202, XQ+RI Team member. Sue Kolenda, Arts Educator at Lincoln High School. Sue Donovan and Sharon Kochan, Rhode Island Parent Information Network. Michael Hassell, principal of Scituate High School. Michael Hobin, principal at Westerly High School and Jeanine Nota-Masse, Superintendent Cranton Public Schools.

Chair DiCenso thanked everyone for their comments and addressed some of the issues that were raised. Commissioner Infante-Green thanked Steve and Olivia and noted that RIDE would be there to support RI schools along the way.

Mr. Osborn addressed three key priorities of the proposal which include Rhode Island will prepare our graduates to create their own future, Rhode Island will increase engagement through real-world relevant learning experiences and Rhode Island will change how we support our children and families. He added that at the fourth K-12 Council Subcommittee Meeting. RIDE will discuss feedback from this evening's presentation, and the initiatives that they will need to prioritize in the Action Plan to support the successful implementation of the proposed Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements.

Member Almeida commented on the priorities mentioned that will require extensive planning and support. Member Curci also spoke on the timeline of implementation and made a few suggestions. Members Callahan and Beretta, and Barden in addition to Chair Cottam also provided feedback on Mr. Osborn's presentation and provided suggestions.

Commissioner Infante-Green announced the Chair Barbara Cottam will be headed to Washington, D.C. to work with Secretary of Commerce, Gina Raimondo. She thanked Chair Cottam for all her hard work and dedication to our kids in Rhode Island.

Chair Cottam thanked the Council and RIDE staff for their time and service and professionalism.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Approval of the FY 2024 Budget

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Colleen Callahan.

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves

and transmits the FY 2024 current service level and the FY 2023 Revised budgets to the Rhode Island State Budget Office and further approve their transmission to the Rhode Island Board of Education, for final approval as presented.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative, 0 members voted in the negative and 0 members abstained, as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, and Patricia DiCenso

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Approval of the 21st Century Technology & Equipment Funds

On a motion duly made by Chair Cottam and seconded by Amy Beretta

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Allocation of \$15,000,000 of the Fiscal Year 2023 SBA Capital Fund as Presented.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative, 0 members voted in the negative and 0 members abstained, as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, and Patricia DiCenso

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair DiCenso expressed her gratitude for Chair Cottam and thanked her for everything.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Michael Almeida, it was

VOTED: That the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

Adjourns

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative, 0 members voted in the negative, and 0 members abstained as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, and Patricia DiCenso

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.