



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
November 15, 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 5:32p.m.

Present: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Joe Eva Gaines

Absent: Mary Barden, Marta Martinez

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Michael Almeida, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the November 15, 2022, meeting

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion duly made by Michael Almeida and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary approve the minutes of the October 3, 2022, meeting

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

(Member Davis recused herself as she did not attend the October 3, meeting)

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green welcomed everyone and began her report by addressing the released results of RICAS. She added that the results and breakdowns of district, school, and demographic data can be viewed on RIDE's Assessment Data Portal which can be accessed on our website at RIDE.RI.GOV. She went on to explain that statewide, we saw a significant increase in RICAS math proficiency of approximately 7% and a slight decline in ELA of approximately 2%. The results show that while a lot of work remains ahead to get our students back up to speed, Rhode Island is on its way to recovery. She added that RIDE is encouraged that some schools and districts have returned to their pre-pandemic RICAS levels or exceeded them, and that our statewide focus on math instruction and support led to a significant jump in math performance across the state. She continued to say that RIDE will continue to support school leaders to better serve the needs of students and meet the priorities of their communities to help all students recover. She highlighted that this year RIDE has prepared for the first time ever informational videos for families specifically tailored for their students all accessible through a QR code. They are also available in ten languages and help families understand their child's performance at the school, district, and state level. A report from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment released last spring indicated that recovering to pre-pandemic levels of student achievement will require three to five years of accelerated learning. She mentioned that RIDE will not be able to recover overnight but are taking steps in the right direction and are optimistic of what is ahead.

She continued her report discussing student support and was optimistic since RIDE is working diligently to make sure that students and school staff have the right support and resources to get ahead. She added that in line with the recommendations of the LEAP Task Force, RIDE continues to expand access to high-quality, free extended learning opportunities. RIDE is also making sure more students can participate in these opportunities through the All-Course Network - or ACN as it is widely known. The Spring 2023 ACN course registration is currently open and available through December 9, at 5pm and the Spring 2023 course lotteries are set to run on Tuesday, December 13 and asked that the council share with their networks and encourage students to browse courses and register on EnrollRI.org. She mentioned that the course opportunities include life and college readiness courses, coding, SAT/PSAT test prep sessions, February and April vacation camps, arts and fashion exploration, and much more. Commissioner Infante-Green also mentioned that RIDE recently announced a robust menu of support to help LEAs launch high-impact tutoring programs

and enhance their impact on students. She added that just last week, it was announced that RIDE has been awarded \$250,000 in competitive grant funding to develop state-level policies and systems to support the scaling and sustainability of high-impact tutoring of students in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. RIDE was the only state education agency among more than 30 grant recipients nationwide to receive funding from Accelerate. She added that RIDE knows we are at a critical time in education and RIDE is working hard to meet this moment and help our kids succeed.

The next topic the Commissioner discussed in her report was school construction. She discussed the fact that RIDE knows that the conditions of the spaces in which students learn and grow matter and that RIDE is deeply committed to ensuring that all Rhode Island students learn and thrive in 21st century learning spaces that inspire them to reach their highest potential. She continued to say that last election day, RIDE saw an unprecedented commitment to building new schools and making major improvements across the state. Voters overwhelmingly passed another \$250 million statewide school construction bond to make improvements. RIDE also saw over \$1.1 billion in local school construction referendum pass. This included \$125 million in Providence which will support a nearly \$500 million dollar school improvement plan. She added that under the newer and fewer approach which has been followed across Rhode Island, these funds will help transform school buildings to benefit students and staff, create jobs, and revitalize communities.

Virtual Learning Plans was next on the report and Commissioner Infante-Green stated that 14 LEAs have submitted plans for virtual instructional days in the event of inclement weather or another emergency. She added that she has approved five of these plans under delegated authority given by this Council during our January 2022 meeting. The five LEAs are Central Falls, Coventry, North Providence, Pawtucket, and West Warwick. The remaining plans submitted are currently under review and may be recommended for my approval under delegated authority if a Declaration of Disaster Emergency remains in effect in the state.

Lastly, Commissioner Infante-Green announced that RIDE just celebrated National School Psychology Week and highlighted the important work our school psychologists and other educators do to help all students thrive, this year's theme was "Together We Shine," derived from how we see hope after several challenging years. She added that we have all faced difficulties created by the pandemic, social injustice and inequity, economic stress, and challenges to mental and physical health. She closed by adding that her hope is that every week, RIDE continues highlighting our school psychologists and their unwavering commitment to our kids.

4. OPEN FORUM

One individual addressed the Council, and 1 individual sent a written comment.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Student Support – 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. Superintendent Montanez shared some exciting news related to school construction. He stated that the buildings that have been neglected for years now can start a new chapter since the city and statewide bond questions were approved by voters. He added that he and his team are moving quickly to gather community input on what the students and families want in their schools. Superintendent Montanez continued by addressing the barriers that are keeping kids from coming to school. He added that students in Providence face a lot of economic challenges and that tonight the Council will hear from team members and community partners about how Providence is helping students and families overcome food insecurity. Superintendent Montanez was proud and excited for everyone to hear about some of the great work that goes on in our PPSD food pantries. He then passed the meeting over to Stephen Grace, Coordinator of Student Supports.

Stephen Grace shared the current food pantry locations in Providence. Providence Public Schools currently has two food pantries in operation, with a third in progress. These locations include Central High School and Mount Pleasant High School. DelSesto Middle School is in progress, and they would also service Carnevale Elementary School. He shared the We Share Hope, a local non-profit, retrieves surplus food from partners in the food industry and deliveries are provided six days a week to nonprofits in Rhode Island who serve meals. He added that refrigerated and fresh foods are also stored on-site. These pantries have a huge impact on students. Mr. Grace emphasized the importance of having fresh food pantries in Providence Public Schools was a huge priority. Food insecurity has been shown to reduce a child's chances of graduating. Focusing, learning, and retaining information is more difficult for hungry students. Improved nutrition and reduced mental stress for students and families. He continued by discussing next steps which include expansion, sustainability and community events for awareness and spreading the great news. Mr. Grace introduced Johanna Corcoran, Executive Director of We Share Hope and Julie Horsham from Central Falls High School.

Ms. Corcoran began by addressing the goal for We Share Hope and that was to eliminate or reduce some of the stress over food and insecurities. She explained that they partnered with Central Falls to provide refrigerated and fresh food as well as shelf stable foods. Ms. Corcoran explained the process for the food deliveries and the impact on the students.

Ms. Horsham also addressed her experiences within the food pantry at Central Falls High School. She explained that they are supporting at least 100 families with the partnership with We Share Hope.

Mr. Grace thanked Ms. Horsham for all her hard work helping the families feel supported.

Commissioner Infante-Green asked Superintendent Montanez to discuss school choice. Superintendent Montanez explained that they will be having a school choice fair where families will meet principals and receive information to see which school best fits their child's needs. He also shared that there will be a table that will be discussing the bonds that will help improve the buildings of Providence Public Schools.

Member Beretta questioned the process for the students of Providence to be able to choose what school to attend regardless of their address. Superintendent Montanez explained that students can choose their top three schools.

Member Gaines asked how long school choice has been included in the Providence registration process, to which Superintendent Montanez responded by saying that this is not something new.

Members had not heard of school choice and were happy to hear this was an option for students and families.

b. SEL Endorsement

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 of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Foehr, and Associate Director, Student, Community and Academic Success.

Ms. Foehr began by introducing Gina Masiello, Director of Excellence and Certification. She then led the discussion by addressing what an endorsement is and explaining the criteria associated with which is not required for school assignments. It is designed to expand or deepen content knowledge or specialty area expertise and may be added to a current, existing, and valid RI certificate. It was added that RIDE's role is to designate endorsement areas, develop competencies and seek council approval. The approved endorsement areas include computer science, literacy/dyslexia, and multilingual learners, this will be the fourth area that will be added. Ms. Foehr discussed the reason why adding social emotional learning as an endorsement was important. This includes the fact that SEL is a well-documented approach to support the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. SEL will also allow educators to demonstrate proficiency in the competencies and has become an increasing priority for schools and districts, especially following COVID-19 related school disruptions. SEL is also aligned to the strategic plan goals of strengthening school culture and creating safe and supportive school environments. She went into detail and explained the competencies of the social and emotional learning endorsement and discussed next steps which include offering a professional learning series by providers aligned to the SEL competencies and may apply to be a RIDE approved SEL endorsement provider. The SEL endorsement will also allow educators to demonstrate proficiency to the competencies. Lastly, approved providers will be added to the RIDE certification webpage.

Council members asked questions related to the cost of the courses, associated hours, communication to providers, access to coursework and programs available. Questions also included SEL support to teachers in the form of professional development and the number of hours related to the competencies. Ms. Foehr and Ms. Reilly-Chammat explained that communication would be sent after approval of the endorsement by the Council. Ms. Reilly-Chammat explained that their partnership with Bridge RI will help bring interest to the free courses that are available.

Chair DiCenso asked whether teachers would be provided SEL support. Ms. Reilly-Chammat explained that this was embedded into the standards.

Member Davis enquired if the only way a teacher can access support is through the provided courses or if other services were available. Ms. Foehr explained that there are and continue to be a lot of professional development opportunities. Commissioner Infante-Green added that an online course provided by Yale is also available free of charge.

c. Right to Read Regulations Discussion

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner, Lisa Odom-Villella to frame the discussion. Deputy Commissioner Odom-Villella introduced RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Foehr and Director of Assessment, Instruction, and Curriculum, Phyllis Lynch.

Ms. Foehr began by informing the Council that the conversation tonight was an opportunity to receive questions, comments, and feedback from the council before a draft of the regulations is created. Conversations will also be occurring with other stakeholders within the next few weeks to begin discussions and receive feedback. Ms. Lynch continued with a brief background on the Right to Read Act and a brief overview on the science of reading and structured literacy and the impact it has on instruction. In both awareness and proficiency training, participants learn explicit, systematic, multimodal instruction. Subskills of reading include Phonology, Phonics, Decoding, Encoding, Vocabulary, Fluency, Syntax, and Language Comprehension. They also learn the impact of weaknesses in these subskills and assessments and teaching practices that align with the Science of Reading and structured literacy instruction.

The Right to Read Act was also discussed in its current state and preliminary data reported by 60 LEAs was provided. Ms. Foehr discussed the teacher, LEA, EPP requirements and responsibilities for PK-12 were discussed. She mentioned that out-of-state teachers and teachers moving from an awareness level role to a proficiency level role will have one year to meet requirements. If the proficiency training program extends beyond one year, then the teacher may complete the requirement within two years. Non-compliance of the requirements for LEAs and teachers was also included in the discussion. Next steps include conducting early engagement discussions, completing draft regulations, seeking approval for public comment, reviewing public comment for revisions, and seeking final Council approval.

Member Callahan had a concern related to communication and requested language added to reference the district needs to meet their own requirements. She also suggested providing clarity on the number of hours.

d. State Assessment Results Briefing

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner, Lisa Odom-Villella to frame the discussion. Deputy Commissioner Odom-Villella introduced RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Foehr, Director of Assessment, Instruction, and Curriculum, Phyllis Lynch and Veronica Salas, Multilingual Learner Specialist she also explained that the Council has been provided with the complete presentation however the team would not be going through the entire deck and will only provide a high-level overview.

Ms. Foehr began by providing a summary of the presentation, which includes an overview of slides, key takeaways, RICAS English Language Arts, RICAS Mathematics, PSAT Summary, SAT Summary, Dynamic Learning Maps, ACCESS Summary, Next Steps and Appendices which include District and school profiles and achievement levels. She explained the COVID Effect on Teaching and Assessment. She added that despite schools being fully open last year, COVID-19 still impacted most aspects of education, making it more critical to assess student performance and identify needs and priority areas. Prior changes in school format limited student's access to crucial academic and social-emotional supports. She mentioned that while participation in state assessments increased, high school level participation is still below 95%, particularly for students already facing extraordinary barriers to participation.

She discussed major takeaways which include an increase in participation for RICAS, SAT and NGSA compared to 2021, although high school participation continues to be below 95%. Overall changes in student ELA and mathematics performance from 2021 to 2022 were mixed across the state. Performance in RICAS ELA declined in the early grades, as anticipated, because of the pandemic disruption. The state focus on mathematics is beginning to pay off as RIDE saw an increase in performance in RICAS mathematics across all grades. Consistent with NAEP results, ELA and mathematics performance is below performance in 2019 prior to the pandemic. NGSA Science performance was also mixed with an increase in grade 5 and a decrease in grade 11. Rhode Island students aren't the only ones who are showing a decrease in performance. In fact, RIDE saw less of a drop in ELA than our neighbors in Massachusetts and a similar increase in math. Our neighbors in Connecticut who also administer SAT as their state assessment, saw similar decreases in SAT performance from 2019 to 2022. There continues to be significant differences in the levels of proficiency by students in urban districts versus those in suburban districts. Ms. Foehr, Ms. Lynch, and Ms. Salas explained the data concerning RICAS, ELA and Mathematics, ELA, and Mathematics, NGSA, DLM, ACCESS, and MLL.

Member Davis questioned whether RIDE had a theory on the reason behind the increase in Mathematics to which Ms. Lynch spoke to the cohorts the agency has been running with support

of the districts. Ms. Lynch added many districts adopted their math curriculum prior to the pandemic.

Chair DiCenso asked if data teachers received was targeted to individual students in their class Is RIDE monitoring the time spent on teachers meeting on students' growth and to move the kids to the next grade level. How do we support the teachers analyzing the data and acting? Ms. Foehr explained that one of the things the Commissioner has done is have LEA leaders meet in advance of the release of results and ensure they are logging onto the student data portal and engaging in their own district and school levels data.

Commissioner Infante-Green also added that RIDE has been meeting with district superintendent in small groups where they will be share feedback with one another.

Dr. Roldán added that this year as part of the district accountability act each district must create not only a strategic plan but a yearly action plan that will capture each school in each district. We will have it in writing by June 30, 2023.

Chair DiCenso shared the importance of having the principals meet with RIDE. Dr. Roldán explained that during the summer RIDE held meeting and the demand is growing for continuous meetings with principals.

Member Davis wanted to know what support families will be given to help their students become proficient.

Commissioner Infante-Green explained that key questions that can be asked of the schools as to what is available are included in the report. She also added that Superintendents were notified to amend their ESSER plans based on the data.

e. Secondary Regulations

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

Mr. Osborn began by providing an update on the summary of feedback and next steps from the October 3, 2022, K-12 Council meeting. He mentioned that RIDE has taken a supportive and collaborative approach toward reimagining high school and the secondary regulations. Leaders are supportive of the proposed changes. They look to RIDE for support in operationalizing the changes our kids need and deserve. He added that our leaders are concerned about their ability to operationalize these changes for the Fall of 2023. Mr. Osborn stated that the K-12 Council Subcommittee met for a fourth time on November 9, 2022, and reviewed what was heard on October 3, 2022, and a draft of the Action Plan to support the implementation of the regulations. The Subcommittee on Secondary Regulations proposed and approved a resolution to have the

updated regulations take effect with the Class of 2028. This change is reflected in the updated regulations that are included in the packets this evening. The Action Plan was created based on the response to what was heard from all the stakeholders to support the successful implementation of Readiness – Based Graduation requirements. Mr. Osborn explained that the action plan consists of six goals, which include partnership and collaboration, reimagined learning, developing a statewide approach to comprehensive school counseling, preparing our kids to create their future, increasing engagement in our schools by increasing real-world relevant learning experiences, and changing how we support our students and families. He thanked everyone for their time, thought, conversation and partnership to make sure RIDE gets this proposal right for our kids.

Chair DiCenso and council members discussed the importance of the secondary regulations and the impact it will have on future students of Rhode Island.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. SEL Endorsement

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Amy Berretta.

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves a new endorsement area in Social Emotional Learning as presented.

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Secondary Regulations

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the The amended Regulations of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Secondary Regulations as presented.

Member Beretta made an amendment to vote as the language changed verbally to add D to paragraph 8; the council moved to approve as amended.

0

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines

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, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.