



RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The second work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education was held on Wednesday, May 8th, 2013, at the Department of Education, Room 501, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, 02903. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present and noted that Lt. Col. Santos had notified staff that he was running late due to an accident on the highway (which was also delaying President Dooley's arrival). Chair Mancuso called the work session to order at 4:05 p.m.

Present: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, and Lawrence Purtill. (Mathies Santos arrived shortly after)

Absent: William C. Maaia

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the work session of May 8, 2013.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, and Lawrence Purtill.

NAYS: 0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Gist introduced **Item 2a – Rhode Island Diploma System**. She explained that RIDE administrators and staff met with a number of groups, including business leaders, community organizers, legislators, school committees, principals, and districts on revisions and improvements to Rhode Island's diploma system.

RIDE's Chief of Accelerating School Performance, Andrea Castaneda, walked board members through the document in their packets, explaining that the former Board of Regents set out to establish a diploma system with four characteristics that had comparable access across the state, that were rigorous, and that were credible to stakeholders. The reform work, Ms. Castaneda noted, began ten years ago and there are still skill gaps in students. 75% of recent high school graduates entering CCRI need remedial courses, while of those 75%, only 25% will complete their associate's degree within three years. There is a need for young adults to prepare for jobs that increasingly require post-secondary education or technical training.

Michael Bernstein asked about the percentage of out-of-state CCRI students' remediation needs. President Di Pasquale said that 99% of CCRI's students are Rhode Islanders. He also

said that the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) recently reported that 65-75% of all students entering community colleges need remediation, so although the numbers are troubling, the issue goes beyond Rhode Island.

Jo Eva Gaines cautioned her fellow board members that the 75% number only refers to those incoming CCRI students who recently graduated from Rhode Island high schools. It does not mean 75% of all CCRI students, who are a diverse population that includes adult students and English Language Learners. Ms. Castaneda added that if remediation is needed, students are less likely to complete their associate's degrees.

There are multiple measures for graduation, Ms. Castaneda continued. Students must succeed in three areas: coursework, performance-based assessments, and state assessment. The first is overseen by Local Education Authorities (LEAs), or school districts. The second is the students' portfolio, their deep pursuit of an area about which they really care. The third is required to show growth and proficiency in reading and math. All three areas are equally weighed for students to earn diplomas.

Chair Mancuso asked whether there were complaints or debate regarding the first two areas and Ms. Castaneda responded that RIDE has not heard of any complaints regarding coursework being too rigorous (although, as Patrick Guida noted, those complaints are more likely to go only to districts and not to RIDE). The performance (portfolio) measurement is nearly ten years old now and initial concerns have settled. In fact, students appear to find the experience enriching, and although some students struggle with their projects, it is very rare to withhold a diploma for failing to meet this measurement.

As for the state assessment, Ms. Castaneda directed board members' attention to the PowerPoint slide regarding multiple opportunities given to students to meet this requirement. Students must score partially proficient or better on the NECAP in October of their junior year, then show improvement when taking the test a year after. 10,000 juniors took the NECAP, and a substantial amount scored a 2 or higher for requirements. However, 4,000 didn't get to a 2 in math. Every year is providing intervention, tutoring, summer programs, and other support between October and today. There is an urgency to give students skills needed to take the NECAP again their senior year.

As a former member of the Board of Regents, Colleen Callahan voiced that the Regents did not intend for support between October and graduation for seniors, but rather before students reach their junior year so they are informed and prepared. She wondered if supports are in place for 9th graders and whether there are audits in place. Ms. Castaneda responded that district responses since current juniors took the test show a clear snapshot of urgency and response. The measurements are more precise because schools used to have interventions and diagnoses based on prior recommendations and policies.

Michael Grande wondered if the Board of Regents anticipated and budgeted for the level of support that we now know is needed for students. Ms. Castaneda answered that although there are no large-scale exit measures, the 4,000 students were predictable. It is hard to evaluate the costs, but superintendents re-appropriated funds or found new funding sources as a "moral responsibility." Mr. Grande applauded districts and noted that it would be interesting to know what remediation, extra courses, and other interventions cost.

Dr. Callahan agreed that the kind of supports that are needed, although tremendous, were anticipated. But, she wondered, what kind of check-ins are being done with districts? Ms. Castaneda responded that the LEAs were responsive from the start, from promulgating regular focus groups to work on strategy and program sharing between urban cores to communication and technical outreach (training and materials at all schools).

Michael Grande wondered if the budget impact was anticipated by all districts, and do they all need to plan going forward? Ms. Castaneda responded that cost drivers can range from the volume of kids to method of delivery (in-class deliveries, instructional materials, etc.), to out-of-school time such as summer programs. These summer programs, she explained, cost about \$300-500 per student – but they were happening anyway as pre-existing programs.

Students, Ms. Castaneda continued, have options their senior year between taking the NECAP for a third time or taking other approved tests. They can also apply for waivers, appeals, or extra time. Retakes provide the best sense of performance, as students who do not reach a 2 can still show growth not associated with random chance. Growth numbers are published so students have a progress plan to target scores.

Chair Mancuso wondered if it would be possible to receive the test results faster, and Mary Ann Snider said RIDE is working with the vendor to get some information mid-January on students who took a retest. However, they score all at once because it is the same test whether taken once or multiple times.

Mr. Grande wondered how many students took advantage of supporting structures. Online math modules are offered without cost by RIDE with live tutoring. 2,800 kids are enrolled, and the program will provide pre- and post-test and completion data.

Students who do *not* show growth, Ms. Castaneda continued, take either a modified version of the state assessment or take content-specific tests. Lawrence Purtill asked for examples, and she stated that published sets such as Accuplacer are most useful, as cut scores allow students to place. The PSAT is taken free by all Providence students (unlike Accuplacer, this test is administered in-school), and the AP is another example of an alternate test. All tests must meet criteria for useful assessment for graduation.

Mr. Purtill noted that students are taking AP tests this week, but the results will not be available until July. How will that help evaluate struggling students' readiness for graduation in June? The AP is not the type of test expected to be taken by the 4,000 students who failed to reach a 2 in math, but the Accuplacer is the best example of an alternate test for those students. Students are being encouraged to rely on the second administration of the NECAP, however, because that is an effective and efficient way of showing if they have grown since first taking the test.

Chair Mancuso asked how a district approaches RIDE with tests and Ms. Castaneda said the criteria is published. Tests must meet standardized measures, objectives, and be devised by a third party, not by the school. They must also test the same content areas as the state assessment.

Dr. Callahan asked what students do if they want alternate measures, and Ms. Castaneda said guidance counselors and the schools help students find alternates. For example, if a student wants the Accuplacer, the score will hold if they choose to attend CCRI (Sharon Lee added that the test is taken between January and March of the student's senior year and carry over for application and registration at CCRI before classes begin in the fall).

Jo Eva Gaines asked how the PSAT is factored when it is typically taken in sophomore year, and Ms. Castaneda said that test can be taken by both sophomores and juniors; it must be taken in the student's junior year for the test to count.

Antonio Barajas asked about the modified NECAP retaken by students, and Ms. Castaneda said the modified version is somewhat "slimmer" and asks questions in slightly different ways. Students also have more time to complete the modified test, and it selects test items that

students struggle with. The technical team uses scores that exceed what would be random chance. Typically, students would need to have 6-8 more correct answers than the first time they took the test.

Dr. Callahan asked how assurance is given for prediction of success; how are growth and readiness determined? Ms. Castaneda said the overall goal is proficiency for all students, but 4,000 students' scores show they need additional help. Personalizing that help leads to growth.

Mr. Purtill asked if programs such as art or music are being cut to make up for this focus on math, noting that people are questioning whether the NECAP is the best determination of graduation requirements and that even the creators of the test have said it should not be used as a graduation requirement. Ms. Castaneda responded that the NECAP was developed to be accurate and that the developers are confident of its accuracy. Mr. Purtill responded that the Board should have a conversation down the road regarding alternate testing, and Dr. Callahan concurred, stating that analysis is needed to ensure that NECAP is the best test for students' skills. If so, that topic would go through the Executive Committee for submission to a future meeting agenda. It is not a discussion topic for today.

Mathies Santos asked for clarification on "accurate at student level" and Ms. Castaneda clarified that the phrase refers to the individual test-taker level, which was designed so that performance is stable across the board each time the test is taken. Commissioner Deborah Gist added that the design is accurate and appropriate as a graduation requirement.

Ms. Gaines commented that students can obtain waivers and appeals for extra time. Ms. Castaneda said that although some students in 9th and 10th grade have mastery but do not test well, *most* students who test poorly truly have skills gaps. Waiving the test requirement is based on a preponderance of evidence that students have mastered the content. Appeals are decided at superintendent and school committee levels. Extra time is available to all students, not just those with IEPs or in special education.

Item 2b – Rhode Island's Early Learning and Development Standards

Commissioner Gist said the Board will be asked on May 23rd to adopt early learning and development standards, and Mary Ann Snider added that they are an important piece to strengthen early childhood development for all kids to be prepared for kindergarten. Michelle Palermo explained that these standards would replace those adopted in 2003 on what four-year-olds should know. Now, Rate to the Top has expanded the ages from birth to age 5. The standards will be building blocks for growth and foundations for success, and RIDE has worked with national experts and stakeholders to uniquely adopt these for Rhode Island kids while aligning with common cores in literacy and math. There are nine domains including language and motor development.

Karin Forbes noted that people at hearings asked about having time for all hours and Ms. Palermo said that program standards are a different topic than early learning and development standards.

Chair Mancuso asked about the next step. There will be a support field in using these standards focusing on professional development and working with Higher Education to align teacher preparation with them. As for public comment, the chair's next question, input was sought during the development of these standards via focus groups, forums, and more. Chair Mancuso asked that stakeholders be notified that the Board will be asked on May 23rd to adopt these standards and Ms. Palermo agreed.

Dr. Barajas asked how English Language Learner students are being integrated and analyzed and Ms. Palermo said this has been addressed by national experts. Kids in dual language development were sought on panels and they can demonstrate the language development in *any* language. Dr. Barajas also wondered how the standards will affect high school and college graduates and Ms. Palermo said the goal is to focus on kids' skills before they enter school, allowing them to enter kindergarten already prepared to access the resources. Ms. Snider added that when young, students enter the education system at different points, and ELL performance is looked at as well as for those who enter education systems after 8th grade. Students' development will depend on the strength of their native education before that point.

Item 2c – Next Generation Science Standards

Ms. Snider reported that the proposed Next Generation Science Standards reflect national focuses on practice and content, providing a coherent approach from early years through high school. She introduced Peter McLaren as a national leader in this area who has represented Rhode Island in conversations on the standards.

Mr. McLaren informed the Board that this was a two-year state-led process in which teams looked at and built on national standards. The guidelines are considered a framework for K-12 science education and practice cross-cutting between sciences (for example, energy could be considered life science as well as earth and space science as well as engineering). Students will build on research and apply practices, and the standards have K-12 progressions. They were created by 41 writers, including many classroom educators, and in May 2012 and January 2013 public drafts went out for comment.

President Dooley asked how evolution is handled, and Mr. McLaren responded that evolution is based in science, not individual theory but rather from research. Inquiry into such issues are components of practices.

Dr. Dooley also commented that research indicates that math is learned best in context, mainly via science, and wondered how that is handled in these standards. Mr. McLaren stated that the Next Generation Science Standards are aligned with both math and literacy common cores.

Colleen Callahan asked what it will take to implement the standards, and Mary Ann Snider responded that there will be a 5-year rollout before changes are complete in state assessment programs.

Jo Eva Gaines referred to "unity" and "diversity" as referenced in the materials distributed to board members and asked how these opposite themes are brought together in evolution. Mr. McLaren said the whole standard is looked at and a clarification statement made and connected to core ideas. For middle school students, full standards are online.

Karin Forbes wondered what a science classroom will look like in five years. The changes will not be dramatic, but would see teachers delivering instruction through practices. American students are good at investigation but need sense-making and need to argue with evidence. Classrooms will slowly become less teacher-centered and more student-centered.

Ms. Forbes asked if there will still be separate teaching areas for biology, chemistry, and physics and was assured that the standards are subject to local curricula, which will in turn align with the standards. Several districts, including Central Falls, Bristol Warren, Tiverton, and Cranston, are already deciding how to organize curricula around the Next Generation Science Standards, and credited Judith Lundsten, superintendent of Cranston public schools, for her work on this.

Commissioner Gist re-introduced **Item 2d, Cranston Area Career and Technical Center Transfer Agreement**. Rhode Island has ten regional centers, and those in Woonsocket, Warwick and Cranston are state-owned but locally operated. If funds are available in the capital budget, RIDE has been asked to appoint draft resolutions and transfer agreements so the properties are locally owned as well as locally operated. This agreement would achieve that but was tabled at the Board of Education's April meeting after the Department of Administration requested a last-minute language change. The language has been clarified, and the Board will again be asked to approve this agreement at their May 23rd meeting so time is not lost on summer repairs at the school.

Item 2e, Commissioner Gist explained, requests the granting of a charter to the **Village Green Charter School**. If the Board approves this renewal on May 23rd, the school will have its final approval to open for the fall. The school completed all steps from initial approval to application reviews and public hearings.

Karin Forbes asked where the charter school is located, and Ms. Castaneda responded that it is in the former Boy Scout building next to the Classical High School athletic field.

Colleen Callahan asked about certification areas and Ms. Castaneda assured board members that Village Green and its teachers are certified in content areas as part of its application.

Item 2f is a renewal for **The Highlander Charter School**. Highlander's current charter concludes this school year, and the school made significant headway in structural planning. Head of School Rose Mary Grant and her team, Commissioner Gist said, have collaborated with both teachers and with families, creating great work and changes. The Board of Education is setting high expectations for schools.

Ms. Castaneda added that three elements are taken into account for this charter renewal: academic program success, site visits, and financial stability.

As there were no questions, the Board moved on to **Item 2g, Establish a Policy Enabling URI, RIC and CCRI to Make Individual Institutional Decisions to Arm Campus Police**. Chair Mancuso noted that Major Stephen, URI's Director of Public Safety in Kingston, and Lt. Michael Chalek from the Providence campus asked to speak to the Board of Education on this item. Chair Mancuso also asked Fred Ghio, Director of Campus Police at Rhode Island College, to be at today's work session.

President Dooley began by referring to the incident last month with the false report of a gun on campus, which gave URI an opportunity to assess its reactions. Vice President Bob Weygand led a small group that assessed those reactions and met with both the South Kingston Police Department and with Rhode Island State Police. All agreed on the steps needed to make the campus safer, including a recommendation to arm campus police officers.

Vice President Weygand said the report focused on five areas for improvement; one was arming but the others includes training and educating faculty, staff, and students. URI's campus, he said, is porous. Emergency communications to notify faculty, staff and students need both software and physical infrastructure improvements, and visitors must be kept informed as well. Issues, such as how the cell phone towers jammed during the incident, are being addressed, and URI will make physical improvements to locks and video systems.

As for arming, VP Weygand continued, there are two major issues. The first is response time. URI officers were on the scene within one minute but had to wait another 5-6 minutes for armed

members of the South Kingstown Police Department to arrive. URI officers were unable to enter the building to help students and staff, as the officers were unarmed.

Michael Grande asked whether the SK police would enter a building immediately or wait for more backup and learned that they do enter buildings immediately. In this case they entered Chafee upon arrival and also swept the building with dogs.

The second major issue regarding arming, VP Weygand continued, is that it will apply only to campus police officers and not to security guard. Not all members of the public, he said, realize that the campus police officers at URI, RIC and CCRI have all graduated from municipal academies. URI's staff includes former chiefs of police from Cranston and Westerly. However, all of these officers would need new training and recertification before receiving their equipment.

Chair Mancuso asked VP Weygand to speak to the May 7th briefing, and he explained that Colonel Steven O'Donnell and Captain Frank Castellone of the Rhode Island State Police gathered police departments, emergency services, college administrators, and others to discuss the incident that had happened at URI. All were in support of arming campus police and in collaborating on these types of situations. We're in a different world now, Vice President Weygand said, and well-trained individuals need to be prepared for any situation. He had initially opposed arming campus police, Mr. Weygand continued, but being on campus that day he realized that 5-6 minutes is too long for students, faculty and staff to wait during an emergency.

President Dooley said URI's process began with that report, then an open forum was held today with a number of views represented. Not everyone is in favor of arming and the University is being mindful of the process. Dr. Dooley clarified that this item would involve enabling, not directing, the institutions to arm their campus police officers if they so choose. He thanked Chair Mancuso and the former Government Relations Committee for approaching this issue and allowing URI to consult and involve the community, noting that it has been a rich and thorough process.

Colleen Callahan asked whether it is required on all campuses for police officers to have graduated from police academies. The answer was yes. All must be certified, and all will need to continue training, psych evaluations, range training, and shoot/don't shoot exercises.

Karin Forbes wondered about communication and preparation for students and parents regarding arming of campus police. President Dooley said campus police officers know the facilities and students the best and develop relationships with students that outside police departments do not have. Parents appear more concerned over campus police *not* being armed. Rhode Island's public higher education institutions are unique; all other states have armed their public colleges and universities except for Oregon, which has not yet decided whether to arm its university.

Ms. Forbes also asked how the institutions would fund arming campus police, and Chair Mancuso said that the approximately \$300,000 needed to arm and train officers would have to be dealt with by the institutions as part of their budgets should they decide to arm.

Michael Bernstein asked what kind of deterrent armed campus police officers are in an event, and Major Baker responded that although it is hard to measure exactly how much of a deterrent, the public higher education institutions in Rhode Island are not gated communities. The object is to address potential events as quickly as possible. The after-action review from Virginia Tech showed that the suspect only killed himself when armed campus police officers burst into the building. He had more weapons, more ammunition, and more targets, and the situation could have been even worse. No study has been done on what may have happened if the campus

police at Virginia Tech had not been armed. URI police officers, Maj. Baker continued, can be there on scene in uniform, but without arms, they have no defense against armed perpetrators.

Michael Grande asked for clarification on how the Board would be empowering the public higher education institutions to make their own decision about arming rather than have the Board of Education make the decision for them, and he was assured that was correct. Mr. Grande wondered if it made more sense for the Board to approve requests made by individual institutions as they are brought to the Board, rather than making a systemic decision.

Colleen Callahan responded to Mr. Grande that the institutions need enabling first to signal how the Board feels about arming. If the institutions do decide to arm, she continued, she would like to see updates on how and when those decisions were made. Chair Mancuso stated that the Executive Committee discussed a checklist for communication, purchase, training, etc., and that the consensus had been that all processes must begin with enabling the institutions to arm if desired. The institutions would then have to take steps and report back to the Board.

Mathies Santos asked if CCRI's Providence campus is co-located with the MET School (it is not). Lt. Col. Santos also asked what would happen if the Board felt that all institutions should arm their campus police but one institution did not want to. In response, Chair Mancuso said the presidents would be asked to study the issue and report back to the Board. Once they were enabled, they would need a deadline. President Dooley added that the institutions would request a process that does not require the institutions to spend money on studies, training, etc. and then be told no. They would want assurance from the Board of Education before moving forward with any plans. \$300,000 may be a small amount compared to the \$372 million total budget, but it is still a significant investment.

Lawrence Purtill asked about a timeframe, and Maj. Baker said if the officers can begin training in the summer – which is the best time to train – they could be armed by next January. Vice President Weygand added that URI and any other institutions would need to make physical improvements to accompany the arming of campus police officers, such as building an armory. If the Board approves arming on May 23rd, then January 1st would be a reasonable deadline.

Michael Bernstein asked what exactly the Board will be asked to approve, and Chair Mancuso read aloud a draft motion: "That each institutional president have the authority to arm their respective police in accordance with all of the laws, regulations and standards set forth in the general laws of Rhode Island for police departments," adding that the General Assembly has stated that it is up to the Board of Education whether officers at Rhode Island's public higher education institutions should be armed.

Colleen Callahan reiterated the Board's desire to be informed of each institution's decision on arming if enabled by the Board and also asked President Carriuolo whether RIC is in the same situation as URI. President Carriuolo said yes, same situation, but she would like to hold talks with the campus before taking any steps.

Jo Eva Gaines noted that the minutes of one of the Government Relations Committees contained a figure of \$30,000 for URI to arm its campus police, not \$300,000. Chair Mancuso said that amount must have been a typo.

Lt. Col. Santos recognized that there is a difference between campuses that would be a factor in their deciding whether or not to arm their police.

The Board moved on to **Item 2h, Henry Barnard Tuition Rates for the 2013-2014 Academic Year**. President Carriuolo said that Henry Barnard is a school on the Rhode Island College campus that serves pre-K through 5th grade students. The tuition for next year was discussed with parents, who agree with the proposed 5% increase. (The tuition year last year increased by 10% in comparison.)

As there were no questions, President Carriuolo continued with **Item 2i, Demolition of Building #29 (Fruit Hill Ave.) at Rhode Island College**, noting that the structure was originally a residence. The building is now in very poor condition and is beyond repair.

Commissioner Di Pasquale handled **Item 2j, Update of CCRI Bank Account Authorizations**, explaining that the language change in the authorizations are a formality because of the change from the RI Board of Governors for Higher Education to the RI Board of Education. There were no questions.

3. NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday, May 23rd, 5:30 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island, Ryan Center, Kingston, RI (Meeting)

Monday, June 3rd, 4 p.m. at RIDE, 255 Westminster Street, Room 501, Providence, RI (Work Session)

4. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 10 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

The work session adjourned at 6:05 p.m.