



Enclosure 2a  
October 28, 2015

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
April 27, 2015**

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Monday, April 27, 2015, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick.

Attendance was as follows:

Antonio Barajas: **absent**  
Amy Beretta: present  
Michael Bernstein: present  
Colleen Callahan: present  
Barbara Cottam: present  
Dennis Duffy: present  
Karin Forbes: present  
Jo Eva Gaines: present  
Constance Howes: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Thomas Izzo: present  
Marta Martinez: **absent**  
Judy Ouellette: present  
Lawrence Purtill: present (arrived at 5:55 p.m.)  
Kerry Rafanelli: present (arrived at 5:40 p.m.)  
John Rainone: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Mathies Santos: present (arrived at 6:45 p.m.)  
John Smith: present  
Joyce Stevos: present  
Stephan Pryor: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Jeffery Williams: **absent**

Chair Barbara Cottam welcomed everyone to the third quarterly meeting of the R.I. Board of Education, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. She stated for the record that Members Barajas, Martinez and Williams would not be joining the meeting this evening due to previously scheduled and unavoidable commitments, that a couple of Board members would be joining a bit later and President Dooley would be departing a bit early.

She then introduced Governor Raimondo and thanked her for joining the meeting.

Governor Raimondo began by stating how grateful she is that Chair Cottam is leading the Board of Education and she thanked her for her commitment to Rhode Island's students and families. She also thanked Commissioner Gist for all of the great work that she has done for the people of the State and wished her all the best.

Governor Raimondo went on to say that there is very important work to be done together and argues that there isn't more important work than preparing our young people to be successful in an increasingly global and competitive economy where good and high paying jobs are going to go to those who have the necessary skills to compete. She voiced that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that we are equipping young people with the skills to be competitive and that she is committed to working with Board members in making certain that we have schools that work, teachers that are supported, and institutions of higher education that have the funding and support that they need to be successful. The budget presently before the General Assembly calls for unprecedented and necessary investments in education, which we owe it to our kids and to our young people.

She also addressed the Board on concurrent and dual enrollment, a very important priority of hers. A core component of her Jobs Plan is skills and training and one piece of that is a program that she calls Prepare R.I., which relates to providing universal dual and concurrent enrollment. The budget that she presented to the General Assembly has the necessary funds to make it so that every public high school student can take college classes for college credit without cost to their families. She also stressed the importance of having the Board approve the Regulations for Dual Enrollment so that students can take advantage of the opportunity to be able to get through high school with almost their Associate's Degree, which will vastly increase their chances of graduating from college and getting a good middle class job.

## 1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Cottam asked for a motion to accept the evening's agenda with the proviso that there may be a need to change the order of agenda items.

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Amy Beretta it was

<b>VOTED:</b>	That,	the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of April 27, 2015.
	Vote:	12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:
	YEAS:	Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes,

Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Judy Ouellette,  
Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, and Joyce Stevos  
NAYS: 0

**[Member Purtill arrived at 5:55 p.m. and Member Santos arrived at 6:45 p.m.]**

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**2a. Minutes of the December 1, 2014, Meeting**

On a motion duly made by Michael Bernstein and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the December 1, 2014, meeting

Vote: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Judy Ouellette, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Member Purtill arrived at 5:55 p.m. and Member Santos arrived at 6:45 p.m.]**

**3. OPEN FORUM**

Chair Cottam reminded everyone wishing to address the Board to keep their remarks to two minutes or less. The following individuals spoke:

- Debra Lilli, Professor of English, CCRI and Carol Panacuone, Foreign Language Department, CCRI, addressed the Board on CCRI’s successful Running Start and Dual Enrollment programs for high school students and stated that the funding that Governor Raimondo is dedicating for high schools to run dual and concurrent programs should be directed to CCRI instead.

[Documents provided to the Board of Education by Open Forum speakers are on file at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education].

Next, Chair Cottam asked that agenda item #6 (Discussion Items) be next on the agenda.

**6. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

## **Enclosure 6a - Proposed Regulations for Dual Enrollment and List of Course Offerings**

Chair Cottam introduced the topic by indicating that this evening the Board of Education is being asked to adopt the dual enrollment regulations, which will provide all qualified Rhode Island high school students, access to college level coursework, while still in high school.

She went on to say that RIDE and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner have worked on providing all students access to the entire course catalog offered by the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and the Community College of Rhode Island by establishing a clear process for high schools to expend concurrent enrollment courses. In total, more than sixty college level courses will be able to be taught by a qualified Rhode Island high school teacher as part of this policy. Clear eligibility criteria will be established so that teachers, students and families can see if students are prepared to take college level coursework.

She reiterated Governor Raimondo's earlier message that \$1.3M in funding is included in the Governor's proposed budget to support Prepare R.I., which will cover the tuition and fees associated with high school students taking college level coursework as part of their high school experience.

Chair Cottam turned the conversation over to Commissioner Gist who shared her excitement to be bringing the Regulations for Dual Enrollment before the Board of Education after the tremendous amount of work that went into putting them together. She acknowledged the great work currently happening at high schools across the state and at the three public institutions of higher education, and stressed that this regulation ensures that we have access for students in all communities consistently across the state. She went on to applaud everyone across the state involved in the development of the regulations and commended Governor Raimondo for paving the way by proposing Prepare R.I., which will bring these regulations to a whole new level. She then turned the conversation over to Commissioner Purcell for a higher education perspective on the topic.

Commissioner Purcell stated that on behalf of the college campuses he is also very excited about this opportunity. He shared that the high school teachers who are selected to offer the dual enrollment courses have been vetted by the department chairs at each of the three institutions of higher education to ensure that the relationships that they have with each of the high schools are of good quality and that the high school students are having a college level experience. The institutions of higher education will review the syllabi and the curriculum as well as the credentials of the high school teachers teaching the courses.

Next, Chair Cottam opened the floor for questions. Board Member Howes asked for clarification on who pays for the courses. Commissioner Purcell answered that the state pays for the courses and since the faculty are state employees, the campuses have agreed to accept a lower cost to basically have someone on the campuses to coordinate the activities.

Board Member Callahan voiced that she is also pleased that we are going to be able to provide student supports on dual enrollment and she wonders if there will be liaisons from the institutions of higher education assigned to the high schools. Commissioner Purcell replied that each institution will identify one individual who will be the liaison working with high schools and superintendents. A fact sheet, with as much detail as possible, will also be posted online and there will also be community outreach to ensure that everyone understands the rights and responsibilities of the students as they take on college level courses.

Member Purtill asked that as part of the reporting process if there will be any follow-up between staff at the institutions of higher education and staff at the high schools to exchange ideas on how to improve the programs. Commissioner Purcell answered that they will be glad to do that as they are looking for opportunities to improve the program. The good news is that the campuses have been doing this kind of work in several of the high schools and those relationships will pay off with the experience that they have had. The big difference being that it will expand into all the other high schools that may not have had the metrics to make some of those things happen.

Member Gaines expressed that this has been going on for a while in the Newport School System, but this effort will level the playing field for all students, not only those who can afford the extra tuition.

Next, Chair Cottam asked that agenda item #7 (Action Items) be moved up on the agenda and asked for a motion.

## 7. ACTION ITEMS

### **Enclosure 7a - Approval of the Board of Education Regulations for Dual Enrollment and List of Course Offerings**

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

**VOTED:** That, the R.I. Board of Education approves the Proposed Regulations for Dual Enrollment and the agreed upon List of Course Offerings from the Community College of Rhode Island, the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College, as presented.

Vote: 13 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Judy Ouellette, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Member Santos arrived at 6:45 p.m.]**

Next, Chair Cottam moved the agenda back to item #4 (Report of the Chair).

#### **4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL**

Chair Cottam began her report by stating that she is honored to have been appointed by Governor Raimondo to chair the R.I. Board of Education and appreciates the confidence that she and others have voiced on her appointment. She shared a few thoughts and her vision as Chair of the Board and began with the words of Nelson Mandela "education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." This quote brings her to her vision, which is for every child and young adult to have the opportunity to receive a high-quality education that allows them to achieve his or her individual potential. Not only is this important to the individual person, it is also important to our state, because if we succeed in this, we will help achieve a strong Rhode Island economy with prepared students for today's and tomorrow's jobs. Chair Cottam went on to say that as the Board continues to do its work, she intends to keep the student at the center of discussions. As Chairwoman, she will work collaboratively and will create a forum where differences of opinion are respected and inclusion and transparency are fostered. As she works together with the Board to build its priorities, some of her priorities are full-day kindergarten, safe schools, partnerships in programs with both businesses and institutions of higher learning to develop those trained and prepared both trade and college graduates, college affordability, and providing support for our teachers and listening to their ideas. As specifics are put in place into the new strategic plan, we will continue on the work that has been done, which includes public and stakeholders' voices and focus on excellence as we have an obligation to require accountability, monitor results and communicate. She is honored to be joining an engaged and knowledgeable education community working on behalf of all of our students.

Chair Cottam continued with her updates and acknowledged that she understands and recognizes the uncertainty of the meeting schedule to date over the last couple of months while waiting for confirmation of new Council members, but that we are going to set and confirm the meetings from now through the end of August and then we will set the annual calendar.

She went on to say that she will be scheduling an orientation session for new Council members as well as for current members as soon as all the new nominees receive Senate approval.

Next, Chair Cottam reported on the Governor's search for the new commissioner of elementary and secondary education and shared that the Governor organized eight group listening sessions with students, teachers, union leaders, school committees, superintendents, etc., with the intent of asking what they want to see in our next commissioner. She enjoyed the opportunity to listen to the various stakeholders and found it beneficial to hear to what people had in mind. The next phase in the process of finding candidates has been tasked to the Governor's staff and as they move closer to identifying a finalist(s), both the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and the full Board of Education will be involved in the process.

Lastly, Chair Cottam thanked everyone who took the time to testify at the State House on behalf of some very important education initiatives in the Governor's budget. She also thanked those Board members who will be attending the upcoming commencement ceremonies.

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Council Chair Bernstein began his report by commending the competent Council as well as the competent leadership at the three institutions of higher education for the tremendous progress made during a very challenging year. He also thanked the Governor and her leadership team for allowing the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to merge with the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority (RIHEAA), which will help in creating a strong office and put the office in a position to be able to manage and professionally resolve issues going forward.

### **5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Gist began by reporting that R.I. recently completed the first part of the PARCC assessment, the performance-based component, and that considering being the first year of administration, the feedback has been overall positive.

Next, she reported that the previous week, RIDE announced that R.I. will be adding six sites this fall to the R.I. Pre-kindergarten Program, bringing the total number of sites to 18, serving 9 communities. The goal is to continue increasing high-quality, early-learning opportunities through the program, and she asked Board members to assist in spreading the word of this great opportunity to families of preschool children.

Lastly, she shared that last Wednesday, Education Secretary Duncan, announced that two Rhode Island schools, the Paul W. Crowley East Bay MET School in Newport and

Ponaganset High School in Foster-Glocester, are winners of the 2015 Green Ribbon School awards. These schools are recognized for reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and providing effective environmental and sustainability education incorporation STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways. With this week's announcement, Rhode Island now has eight public schools that have received Green Ribbon awards.

Next, Commissioner Purcell gave an update on the performance funding bill, which recently went through the Senate. He shared that he personally found it to be a very rewarding experience in understanding how democracy works in Rhode Island as there was lots of collaboration between legislators, the campuses and the faculty in ensuring that we had a performance funding bill that was appropriate. The bill allows flexibility for those in higher education to help identify what the appropriate metrics is, which often doesn't happen in other states. It also allows us to not punish institutions by taking money away, but rather to help them find ways to become more successful.

He also shared that the merger with RIHEAA is an effort to streamline government and to actually focus aid and our efforts on students. In about 30 states, the financial aid unit is underneath the department of higher education, so it is something that he has seen before in some other states and he doesn't think the transition will be problematic. The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner will be moving to the RIHEAA building.

Lastly, he reported that he is excited about the 3.8% funding increase in the budget for higher education, which includes the tuition increases.

## 8. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

### **Enclosure 8a - Strategic Planning for 2015-2020**

Chair Cottam introduced the strategic planning topic and began the conversation by stating that this evening Board members will start the first phase of developing a five-year strategic plan for PK-20 education, which is one of the first and most significant tasks that the Board of Education will undertake.

She went on to share some context about the Board's statutory responsibilities and how she sees the process unfolding over the next several months. She then turned the conversation over to the Commissioners who briefly described the work they've been doing to keep the process on pace for a fall adoption of the Board's strategic plan.

Prior to taking questions from Board members, Chair Cottam shared that the draft before them is the result of a scan of research on recommended policy alignment between K-12 and Postsecondary Education, and in addition to reflecting research, it also ensures that it aligns to and complements the statute covering the Board and both Councils. It also aligns with the Complete College America, the R.I. Department of Planning draft "RhodeMap",

the Governor's Workforce Board biennial plan, and the Lumina Foundation HE policy guide. The draft provides us with a great starting point as it emphasizes our commitment to equity, excellence, and system alignment.

Board Member Howes suggested adding the word "or" in addition to the word "and" to number 2, ensuring that those students whom college may not be the appropriate path, can still benefit from postsecondary education and readiness for the workforce.

She also stated that if supporting and complementing the statewide workforce development efforts is to partner with businesses and to identify the needs of businesses, she wonders whether there is any need to call that out and have education be very closely tied to businesses and get them more as partners in the educational process.

Commissioner Purcell answered that in the objectives and goals that were developed and approved in December there is a mention that they would be outreach to make sure that there is alignment and that the needs of the business and industry are being addressed. There is an overall arching interest in that and of course making sure that some of the college vocational offerings are expanded to address the needs of the business industry.

Board Member Duffy suggested adding one additional broad educational goal, which would increase the number of students achieving academic excellence. He stated that it may be implied throughout the document, but it's important to make that a separately stated goal that applies K-20. He expressed that although we want everyone to get up to proficiency, we cannot let that be at the expense of pushing our top performers to really achieve high levels of excellence.

Board Member Beretta concurred with Member Duffy's observations in that it lacks the requirements that we seek in excellence from our educators, students and stakeholders. It also does not address the global impact if we want our students to compete on the global level. The document needs to be more inspirational rather than aspirational.

Board Member Izzo voiced that while reading through the documents, he felt that the arts and humanities, and all that rich part of people's lives that education really has an obligation to meet, was lacking. Because of the economic forces and the real focus on business and industry, he has the sense that we are losing our way a little bit. In education we have to pay attention to enrichment as opposed to always acceleration or at least keep a good balance between the two. As we are accelerating young people's pathways to further their education, he questions how much we are supporting schools to enrich the entire program. He worries that due to the financial pressure to produce a high-skilled workforce that if we don't direct some of thinking into supporting schools to really enrich the entire program; we are going to miss that piece.

Board Member Stevos shared her concern with number 5. She thinks that it's too broadly stated and that it is rather limiting if one of the goals of education is to prepare young

people for citizenship in our society as well as global citizenship. Students need to be prepared to function in a democratic society, not just in R.I. There are too many young people who do not know anything about their history and who do not understand the political process.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

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

**VOTED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

**Vote:** 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Judy Ouellette, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.