



RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Enclosure 2a

December 9, 2013

A Rhode Island Board of Education work session was held on Thursday, November 7, 2013, at the Department of Education, Room 501, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the work session to order at 4:06 p.m.

Present: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael Grande [arrived at 4:25], Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill [arrived at 4:10], and Mathies Santos

Absent: Michael Bernstein and William C. Maaia

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the work session of November 7, 2013.

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

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

NAYS: 0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Item 2a – Adult Education Program Standards – Request for Public Review and Comment

Commissioner Gist explained that the Board will be asked to vote on the Adult Education Program Standards at the Board's next meeting on November 13th. These standards, which were based on the Common Core State Standards and compiled by the US Department of Education specifically for adult learners, were made to address the essential and relevant skills needed to eliminate the need for remediation when entering postsecondary education.

The program is funded through RIDE with a federal Workforce Investment Act grant, state funding and an allocation from the Governor's Workforce Board. During the last school year the program served more than 6,000 adult learners in a variety of programs ranging from adult education programs to basic education, literacy and English language skills. Roughly half of the students are Spanish speaking immigrants who are learning English as a second language; the majority are currently employed in the workforce.

The Commissioner turned the meeting over to Andrea Castaneda and Phillip Less who provided a summary of the standards. Ms. Castaneda and Mr. Less also addressed Board members' inquiries.

Item 2b – RI Educator Preparation Program Standards – Feedback from Public Review and Comment

Commissioner Gist stated that the Educator Preparation Program Standards, which began last spring and was presented and approved by the Board at its September 9th meeting, has been released as a draft for public review and comment. Since its approval a few months ago, RIDE has engaged regularly with the programs and other stakeholders. Public comments from the field were received both in writing and during four meetings that were held.

The Commissioner thanked Janet Durfee-Hidalgo of the Office of Higher Education for her ongoing encouragement and support.

Mary Ann Snider and Lisa Foehr presented public feedback that was received through the public comment period as well as any additional information that may have been made available during that period of time.

Ms. Snider explained that these standards are not new and have been in place since 2000. At this time, they are looking to review the standards and make sure that they reflect the changes that have been happening nationally and in Rhode Island. Ms. Foehr walked the Board through Standards One through Five, highlighting changes made since the Board's last review at the Retreat in August. Ms. Foehr also answered Board members' questions on all areas of the Standards.

Item 2c – Legislative Priorities

Commissioner Gist stated that during the 2013 legislative session, there were almost 200 pieces of legislation that were related to education. She turned the meeting over to Andy Andrade, the Department's Legislative Liaison who is in the process of working on key legislation and priorities for 2014.

Mr. Andrade spoke of legislative issues including, a bill known as the "teacher notification bill." This bill would change the "pink slip" notification date for teachers from March 1st to June 1st. A later notification date will allow school committees and superintendents to have a better understanding of what their budget is before issuing so-called "pink slips."

There is also a piece of legislation known as "Educator Responsibilities for Student Safety." The Department has been working with the Attorney General's office and State Police on legislation that would provide legal protection for children. This legislation will provide stricter penalties for educators who commit sexual, physical or drug related acts with students even if the student is 18 years old or older.

During last year's legislative session, there were a number of districts who shared concerns on the high cost of servicing students in group homes. This piece of legislation, to increase the amount provided, is expected to take some time as it needs to include a lot of stakeholders to work on a strategy for a solution to this problem.

Mr. Andrade will continue to update the Board on legislative issues through the upcoming session.

Item 2d – State Fire Marshall Tuition Waiver Request

Clark Greene presented the State Fire Marshall's request that members of his division who are employed as "fire investigators" attend courses in crimination investigation offered by the University of RI on tuition waivers. Mr. Greene explained that at the present time, tuition waivers are only granted through specific statutory provisions, the Board's Personnel Policy and through negotiated collective bargaining agreements. Any other waiver requires a full vote of the Board. Given all the attention on waivers, Mr. Greene recommended that the Board discontinue answering ad hoc requests for additional waivers, and ask the Office of Higher Education to work on creating a policy addressing how any additional requests for waivers that are not addressed in the current policy would be handled.

Several Board members shared their concerns, thoughts and questions with Chair Mancuso and Mr. Greene. After a full discussion, Chair Mancuso indicated that she recommends that the Board continue to adhere to the Board's current policy on tuition waivers and not reopen a vote on whether or not to allow ad hoc waiver requests.

Item 2e– Summer Learning Institute

Member Guida announced that NASBE has offered to provide the Board and any additional interested educators with a free 90 minute presentation, *The Summer Learning Institute*, for a discussion on student summer learning and the learning loss that students suffer over the summer. The Board members indicated that this would be a good idea and Vice Chair Guida will work on scheduling it.

Item 2f – Report from the ad Hoc Committee on Assessments and the Diploma System

Member Guida reported that the Committee had met two days ago. At this point the Committee is trying to identify the scope of what can be done and how to manage the data collected from the various districts. The Committee will study how the districts are responding to the issues relating to the students who are involved in the various programs, see how best it can serve as a point of information to assist at both identifying what programs are offered, which ones seem to be most attractive, and which ones might have worked. The Committee determined that it appears that this could be a longer term process to both evaluate all the programs that are offered during the year and find out if there is a way to organize the information so it would be most effective to communicate with the districts what might work best, and to evaluate those programs for future recommendations to the individuals districts.

Item 2g – Higher Education Governance Structure - Update

Clark Greene indicated that there have not been any significant changes to the Higher Education Governance Structure since the Board last met on October 21st. There will be an important Executive Committee meeting on November 21st, and the final recommendation will be presented to the Board at its meeting on December 9th.

Mr. Greene announced that public forums were scheduled for CCRI – December 2nd, RIC – December 3rd and URI – December 4th. There will also be a stakeholders meeting held on November 25th. In response to a Board member's request, Mr. Green added that he would add a fourth public forum to be held on Aquidneck Island.

3. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, November 13th, 5:30 p.m.
New England Laborers Construction and Career Academy, Cranston

4. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Larry Purtill and seconded by Antonio Barajas it was

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

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

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

NAYS: 0

The work session adjourned at 5:28 p.m.