



Enclosure 2b
January 6, 2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
December 9, 2015

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, at the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Present: Daniel McConaghy, *Colby Anderson, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

Absent: Marta Martinez

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

Chair McConaghy stated for the record that Commissioner Wagner would not be joining the meeting and that Deputy Commissioner Abbott would be representing him.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of December 9, 2015

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the October 7, 2015, Council Work Session

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the October 7, 2015 Council Work Session

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Callahan recused herself from this vote, as she did not attend the October 7, 2015, Work Session]

2b. Minutes of the October 20, 2015, Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the October 20, 2015, Council Meeting

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

4. OPEN FORUM

Chair McConaghy stated for the record that three individuals who were not able to attend the meeting submitted public testimony and that it had been shared electronically with the Council earlier that afternoon.

Christine Lopes-Metcalf, Executive Director, RI-CAN – Spoke in support of the Common Core Standards

Tim Duffy, Executive Director, RI Association of School Committees – Spoke about advocating for the amendment to Article 12 (the education article) of the State Constitution

Tracy Ramos, Director – Parents Across R.I. – asked that the Council look at ways to ensure that every child in the State gets recess

Suzanne Arena, Decoding Dyslexia in RI and RI Advocacy for Children – Spoke in support of making recess a state requirement.

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

5. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Chair Cottam reported that the Council on Postsecondary Education at its December 2, 2015, meeting, selected Dr. Meaghan Hughes as the new President of CCRI starting in January.

The Council on Postsecondary Education also approved amendments to its Distance Learning Policy, a mandatory component for the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) among member states, which establishes comparable national standards for interstate offerings of postsecondary distance education courses and programs.

6. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Deputy Abbott began his report by updating the Council on the Senate Commission to Study the Costs, Benefits and Implementation of a Statewide Teacher Contract, which both he and Council Member Gaines are members of. The RI Foundation has sponsored a research study by the District Management Council (DMC), a think tank education consulting group out of Boston, and conversations to date have focused on the research being performed by the group, with a primary emphasis on health insurance. The DMC will have a final report to the Commission in mid-to-late January.

He went on to report that the House of Representatives and the Senate passed the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a bill to fix the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This bill, which is eight years overdue, is very different than the NCLB and eliminates many requirements, including teacher evaluation, the federal accountability system, Adequate Yearly Progress, and gives much more control to the states.

He ended by reporting that last week Governor Raimondo reinvigorated the Children's Cabinet, which released a data-driven, strategic plan with performance measures to drive improvements in outcomes for R.I. children over the next five years.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Graduation Requirements - Update

Mary Ann Snider, RIDE's Chief of Educator Excellence, began the update by sharing that in answer to the Council's charge to RIDE back in September to revisit the High School Regulations, RIDE has been working on three waves of engagement. Meetings have been scheduled with 14 separate "roll-alike" groups (superintendents, high-school principals, student groups, parent groups, and other constituencies) to gather their particular perspectives in reaction to their experiences over the past few years. Then beginning in February through March, RIDE will do a broader engagement and host community meetings, and based on the feedback gathered from the first wave, RIDE will reframe its engagement and begin thinking about how to move forward and get very specific feedback on different components of the Graduation Requirements. The final wave will be to bring specific recommendations to the Council for consideration with opportunity for the public to review and provide comment. The approach to the revisions to the High School Regulations is to really leverage what RIDE has learned over the last few years and align it with what it heard during the strategic planning engagement work last year. It is also an opportunity to connect the diploma work and to bring coherence and structure to the latest conversation around the reimagining high school work, which focuses on engaging students and making sure that their education is personalized, meaningful and relevant, both to the student and the community at large. Any amendments to the High School Regulations will impact the class of 2021.

b. Funding Formula Working Group - Update

Andrea Castaneda joined the table and gave a high-level overview of the seven issue briefs (Differences in Financial Obligations between Traditional School Districts and Public Schools of Choice, School Housing Costs, English Language Learners, Special Education, Expenses and Funding in Career and Technical Education, and Categorical Aid) that the Funding Formula Working Group tackled at its last three meetings. At its next meeting the group will focus on Local Aid and Local Share, and Improving School Finance and Efficiency.

c. Renewal of the Charter of the R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College and Amendment

Deputy Abbott introduced the topic by stating that the RI Nurses Institute Middle College (RINI), a Charter High School in Providence that opened in the 2011-2012 school year, is unique in its overall design, not only because of its content and its

preparation of nurses, but also because it is a 10-12+ model. As part of its renewal application, the school is also requesting an amendment to its charter to reconfigure their current 10-12+ grade model to a more traditional high school configuration of a 9-12 grade model without changing the expected outcomes and readiness of the graduates of the program. The amended structure would apply to their new charter term (2016-17 through 2020-21) starting in academic year 2016-17.

Stephen Osborn joined the conversation and gave a brief overview of the background of the school, the charter renewal process, and walked the Council through the school's NECAP assessment results. Students enrolled at RINI are exposed to college-level coursework as a part of a high school experience and take courses at URI and RIC, and have partnerships with CCRI and local hospitals in order to get students job placement experience.

Council members asked what the original intent was for students to enroll in grade 10 instead of grade 9 and whether students will still be allowed to enroll at RINI after enrolling at a traditional high school. Mr. Osborn replied that a lot of the career and technical programs in R.I. begin in 10th grade and RINI wanted it set-up in a similar way. The other reason is that they wanted to create a pathway for students who may have wanted a different high school experience after enrolling in a traditional high school.

d. Regulations Governing the School Calendar and Length of the School Day - Feedback from Public Review and Comment

Deputy Abbott introduced the topic and reminded Council members that back on September 21st, they had approved, for the purposed of public review and comment, proposed revisions to the Regulations Governing the School Calendar and the Length of the School Day. While the primary impetus for the amendment was to look at the prohibition on two-hour delays for inclement weather, RIDE also removed a lot of out-of-date mandates that it no longer regulates.

Deputy Abbott went over the synopsis of the public comment and pointed out that by far the most public feedback was on recess, which is in the regulations as an exclusion from instructional time. The Basic Education Program Regulations do require recess for grades K-5, however, it does not require an amount of time and it does not characterize what has to happen during recess other than it has to consist of physical activity. Although the Commissioner is very much in favor of recess, he also thinks that this is not the time to be sending the message that we should be in any way diminishing the amount of instructional time that we owe our children, especially in the elementary grades when our reading scores in the 3rd grade are inexcusable.

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of the Regulations Governing the School Calendar and the Length of the School Day

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the proposed revisions to the Regulations Governing the School Calendar and Length of the School Day for submittal and approval by the Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) and furthermore to be posted with the Secretary of State, once approved by ORR.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.