



Enclosure 2c
August 24, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND BOARD OF EDUCATION
July 13, 2015**

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met in a joint meeting of the Board of Education on Monday, July 13, 2015, at the Community College of R.I., 400 East Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

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

[*Non-voting Member]

Absent: Jo Eva Gaines

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Karin Forbes it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of July 13, 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, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

3. OPEN FORUM

Sheila Resseger, former educator, spoke in opposition to the confirmation of Dr. Ken Wagner as the new Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Stephanie Geller, Policy Analyst, R.I. Kids Count, spoke in support of the confirmation of Dr. Ken Wagner as the New Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Ana Cano-Morales, Executive Director, Latino Policy Institute, and Chair of the Central Falls School Board, spoke in support of the confirmation of Dr. Wagner.

Michael Crudale, Principal at the Parkview Middle School, Cranston, spoke in support of the confirmation of Dr. Wagner.

At the request of Council Chair McConaghy, Council Member Callahan read into the record statements that were submitted by Dr. Wagner's references.

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.

4. CHAIRMAN REMARKS

Board Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the joint meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and the full Board of Education for the purpose of providing advice and consent on the appointment of Dr. Ken Wagner to serve as the next R.I. Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Chair Cottam went on to explain that in accordance with R.I.G.L. §16-60-60, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, with the advice and consent of the R.I. Board of Education, shall appoint the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and that the Council is the employer of the Commissioner. As such, both the vote to appoint the position and entering into an employment agreement with him are the purview of the Council, not the full Board. However, as Board Chair, she felt that it was important that the full Board be present to hear the discussion between Dr. Wagner and the Council.

Council Chair McConaghy noted for the record that Dr. Wagner had been notified of his right to have the discussion held in executive session, and that he indicated no objection to proceeding in open session.

Next, Chair McConaghy introduced Governor Raimondo for the purposes of introducing Dr. Wagner.

Governor Raimondo began by sharing that she spent the last four to five months on a statewide listening tour, through which she met with parents, students, teachers, administrators, district

leaders and community members, to hear directly from Rhode Islanders what they hoped for in a new commissioner. She stated that public education is the path to opportunity and if we are going to make Rhode Island a place of opportunity for everybody, then we need an A+ public education system.

During the tour, she listened to hundreds of people and she heard that the education system needs someone of Dr. Wagner's character. A proven leader who has been in the classroom and in the Board room, Dr. Wagner is someone who can inspire us and who has earned respect; puts schools and children's needs first; is collaborative, committed to solving problems; not afraid to do the right thing, and is a good listener. Without any reservation and with all of her confidence, she introduced Dr. Wagner as her choice for new Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Next, Dr. Wagner addressed the members of the Board of Education and thanked them for the opportunity to address them.

He talked about how his career in public education began when he was elected to the school board of his hometown in New York at the age of 18 and how growing up in modest means; school was the place where he felt equal, accepted and inspired. Serving on the board was a chance to give back and a chance to learn.

He also shared that he learned early on how important it is to engage and to listen respectfully to classroom teachers and that he learned a little bit about politics too when he was soundly defeated for reelection to the school board – but the experience lead him to the field of education.

He talked about having served in numerous different roles at the school, district and state levels – from school psychologist to principal to his current role as the senior deputy commissioner in New York. Because of those experiences from the school to the state level, he is deeply familiar with both policy and practice and knows first-hand that well-meaning, thoughtful policies don't always play out as designed. Being that Rhode Island is unique for its size, it allows for more shared decision-making. His first order of business will be to sit down with administrators, principals, teachers, parents, students and community leaders all across the state and listen, so that moving forward, whatever decisions are made; they are aligned with their values and aspirations.

Dr. Wagner ended by stating that as a trained school psychologist, listening is one of his core skills, and that he much prefers listening to speaking.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM

- a. Discussion with and regarding the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary

Next, Chair McConaghy opened the floor for questions from Council members of Dr. Wagner.

Council Members shared that they would be supporting the appointment of Dr. Wagner and that they see him as someone who will listen and respect others' opinions and points of view. They also encouraged him as the new Commissioner to reach out to educators, reestablish relationships and move forward.

Dr. Wagner went on to answer questions on the Common Core, educator evaluation, achievement gaps in terms of student performance, high-quality teacher preparation programs, assessment and common measures of student progress, high-stakes testing, and English language learners.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair McConaghy asked if any of the Council members felt that they needed to ask Dr. Wagner questions in executive session, and they answered that they did not.

7. ACTION ITEM

- a. Appointment of Dr. Ken Wagner as Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and authorization of the Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to negotiate an employment agreement with the Commissioner, whose appointment is subject to advice and consent of the Board of Education.**

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education appoints Dr. Ken Wagner as Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and authorizes the Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to negotiate an employment agreement with the Commissioner.

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, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Colleen Callahan, 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, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The Council on Elementary and Secondary portion of the joint meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.