



Enclosure 2a
February 9, 2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
January 6, 2016

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Wednesday, January 6, 2016, 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, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

Absent: Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

Chair McConaghy stated for the record that members Callahan and Purtill would not be joining this evening's meeting.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos 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 January 6, 2016

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, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the November 18, 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 November 18, 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, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

2b. Minutes of the December 9, 2015, Council Meeting

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the December 9, 2015, Council Meeting

Vote: 6 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, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Martinez recused herself from this vote, as she did not attend the December 9, 2015, Meeting]

3. OPEN FORUM

Keith Oliveira, Chief Operating Officer, R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College – Spoke in support of the renewal of the charter of the R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College

Jody Jencks, Director of Workforce Development, Care New England, and RI. Nurses Institute Middle College Board Member – Spoke in support of the renewal of the charter of the R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College

Sheba Ben, URI student and 2015 graduate of the R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College – Spoke in support of the renewal of the charter of the R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College

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. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Chair Cottam began her report by stating that Dr. Nancy Carriuolo recently announced that she will be stepping down as President of R.I. College at the end of the academic year. The Council on Postsecondary Education will begin a search for the next president in the very near future.

She also reported that although Dr. Meaghan Hughes, the new President of CCRI, does not officially start until February 1st, she has already unofficially begun to meet with her direct reports and has also scheduled a couple of days to meet with the college community on one-on-one, 30-minute meetings, on a first-come, first-served basis.

6. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began his report by giving an update on some of the issues that the Council and RIDE will be engaged in over the next few months - The Funding Formula, the FY 2017 budget, multiple pathways for students that are tied to meaningful standards and meaningful accomplishments, and the role of assessments in the graduation requirements.

He went on to report that the federal law around accountability has just been renewed and there are some changes that will need to be made to R.I.'s accountability plan giving us the opportunity to incentivize, recognize, and rethink how we have been doing things over the last few years on what we value and what we have heard from the R.I. community that they value, in a smart way.

Commissioner Wagner also reported that RIDE is preparing a response to a letter that it received from the U.S. Department of Education on R.I.'s plan for addressing its participation rates in the recent state assessments. He stated that since coming to R.I. he has been very consistent in his message that we absolutely need to care about comparable measures of student progress on an annual basis, but he has been equally consistent and forceful that we need to stop talking about testing and instead focus on teaching and learning.

He ended by giving a status report on the Academy for Career Exploration and the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, the two charters that have submitted evidence and have satisfied the one outstanding condition, which was placed on their charter renewals last year.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Funding Formula Working Group - Update

Andrea Castaneda, Chief of RIDE's Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, began her update by clarifying that the draft document of recommendations being presented this evening does not reflect the Funding Formula Working Group's consensus and it is not something that is considered to be done, but rather, it's RIDE's staff best attempt at capturing and summarizing over 13 hours of public meetings and discussions of the Working Group, and pulling out the most critical points. The document will go through another round of revisions after the Working Group reviews it in more detail at its January 11th meeting.

She then went over the draft recommended topical areas of the Funding Formula Working Group and answered questions:

- Fixed and Marginal Costs
- Differences in Expense Profiles, Traditional Districts and Public Charter Schools
- English Language Learners
- Special Education
- Career and Technical Education
- Public Charter School Housing
- Local Education Aid and Local Share
- Increasing Efficiency and Innovation

b. Strategic Planning - Update

Commissioner Wagner began by stating that he wanted to have a conversation with the Council that is built upon conversations that he has had over the last several weeks with superintendents and with other education stakeholders.

He went on to share a completely different vision for public education in Rhode Island, one that would bring joy back into our schools, encourage inter-district school choice, and invest principals with much more authority.

He spoke about bringing trust and joy back into our schools while dramatically improving teaching and learning for all students. Teaching is the engine that powers great schools and great instruction happens when we provide teachers with time to collaborate, develop curriculum and lessons, review student work, observe one another, and reflect on their practice. We must recruit, support, and retain a diverse staff of teachers and principals into our professional community.

He also talked about students losing interest because their education isn't relevant. Learning comes alive, he said, when students are involved in hands-on projects. Instead of focusing on test scores, he urges schools to offer advanced classes starting in middle school when students are unofficially sorted into academic tracks in seventh and eighth grades. Currently, between 20 percent and 35 percent of students take advanced classes and he wants to make such courses available to 90 percent of Rhode Island students.

Also, senior year, he said, should not be about getting students caught up so they can graduate on time, but rather a time of exploration, creating opportunities for deeper learning and that our high schools will have to change and so will our elementary schools.

He talked about a dramatic suggestion, which calls for investing principals with the power to hire their own staff, manage their budgets, and even set the length of the school day.

Commissioner Wagner also proposed involving and giving parents the opportunity to send their children to another school district if a school has extra seats. Right now, school choice is confined to charter schools. With open enrollment, any public school could become an alternative school of choice.

Council Chair McConaghy expressed that he was inspired by Commissioner Wagner's willingness to be bold, to think outside the box, and for his courage, and that the Council needs to get behind this and enable it to happen.

Board Chair Cottam called Wagner's vision "exciting and energizing," adding that it is vital to create a school culture that is constantly evolving.

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of the Charter of the R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College with Amendment

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew and amend the charter of the Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College for a term of up to five (5) years to continue operations in accordance with its Charter, from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2021, as presented.

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, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Joyce Stevos, it was

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

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, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.