

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 22, 2007

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building-255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 4:10 pm.

In Attendance

J. DiPrete, A. Beretta, C. Callahan, B. Camara, P. Guida, K. Forbes and G. Grove.

Public Remarks

- Carmen Boucher, a Woonsocket community member and parent urged the Regents to approve the Woonsocket school construction project. Ms. Boucher told the members of the Board that her daughter, currently a student at a local Catholic school had asked the Governor to build a second smaller middle school in Woonsocket so that her parents would allow her to attend the public school. Ms. Boucher emphasized that the new school will benefit all Woonsocket students.

Chairman's Remarks

- Ms. Sara Groh, President of the Rhode Island Association of Student Councils commented on the deaths of two Warwick Veteran High School students and thanked the Board for allowing the state assessments to be postponed until next month. Ms. Groh also reported that her organization is focusing on the planning and preparation for their Leadership Awards Dinner to be held on April 24. A complete report is available.
- Chairman DiPrete congratulated Commissioner McWalters on his testimony in front of the House Committee on Education on NCLB; and
- That he and Vice-chairman Guida had attended the NASBE Legislative Conference in Washington last week.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Regents Meeting

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2007.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Appeals

S.D. Doe and A.D. Doe v. Cranston School Committee

Regent Beretta, the Chair of the Board of Regents Appeals Committee summarized the appeal.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, in the Matter of the Appeal of S.D. Doe and A.D. Doe v. Cranston School Committee, the Decision of the Commissioner is Upheld.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of School Construction

Regent Camara briefly reviewed each project followed by a motion by the Board to approve.

BARRINGTON

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for Barrington totaling \$870.300.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously (Regent P. Guida Recused from the vote)

BURRILLVILLE

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for Burrillville totaling \$2,806,706.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

CHARIHO

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for Chariho totaling \$26,000,000.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

THE COMPASS SCHOOL

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for The Compass School totaling \$10,053,285.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

FOSTER-GLOCESTER

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for Foster-Glocester totaling \$12,756,496.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

KINGSTON HILL ACADEMY

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for the Kingston Hill Academy totaling \$1,046,345.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for The Learning Community totaling \$6,604,454.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

NORTH SMITHFIELD

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for North Smithfield totaling \$22,000,000.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

PROVIDENCE

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for Providence totaling \$75,407,972.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously. [Regent P. Guida Recused from the vote]

WOONSOCKET

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction for asset development and improvement projects for Woonsocket totaling \$78,500.000.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of School Construction Regulations for Purpose of Public Hearing

Regent Bob Camara reviewed the proposed regulations, as described in Enclosure 6 of the Board of Regents' package for March 22, 2007 (attached). He explained to the Board that the major change in the draft regulations is the way the department will process school construction applications. Under the new regulations, there will be a two-stage application process that would allow districts to go before the Regents for approval whenever their documentation is complete. Maximum space allowances, cost standards, and ineligible costs are outlined in the regulations. Additionally, the regulations intend to standardize the school construction process in Rhode Island by establishing construction standards. Another major change proposed in the regulations is increased enforcement of projects' compliance with the new regulations, which is common practice in other states. The Regents thanked Don Fudge from the New England Energy Partnership who found a grant to complete this work. The group discussed the section of the regulations requiring school maintenance and that the new regulations allow for "rolling" approvals versus projects coming before the Regents only once a year.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the school construction regulations, as attached, for purpose of public hearing.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Warwick School Department Waiver Request

Commissioner McWalters reviewed the request from the Warwick School Department regarding Greenwood Elementary School.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Waiver of Two School Days for the Greenwood Elementary School.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

High School Update

Commissioner McWalters reported on the ongoing work on the secondary regulations that should take affect by July 2008. Regent Callahan reported that the Board of Regents Committee on Academic and Student Programs (CASP) has met with representatives from the Arts and Career and Technical Education community to discuss the proposed regulations and are continuing to move forward. Ms. Callahan also reported on the meetings on dual enrollment that have come about in response to the work of the Governor's K-16 Council. She also reported to the Regents on a meeting on School Safety that she had attended at CCRI.

Regents' Committee Reports

Administrator & Teacher Quality - Regent Forbes reported that her committee is continuing to study Alternate Certification and the Rhode Island Teacher Standards. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 5 from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Finance & Personnel – Regent Camera told the Board that he had met with the State House Committee on Finance to brief on the budget; and that the proposed new construction regulations will go out for public hearings on April 3 and 4.

PS&I- Regent Guida – Regent Patrick Guida reported that his committee is focusing on interventions in Central Falls and Providence. Members of the Board had met with Superintendent Holland on the Central Falls/URI collaborative and that Frances Gallo has been named as the new Central Falls Superintendent. Mr. Guida also reported that the Commissioner released a letter to the Providence school district on February 15 advising them that the district is now in corrective action. Deputy Commissioner David Abbot told the members of the Board that the Department has met with the Superintendent and his staff to work on their strategic plan. The Commissioner expects to see some better testing results as well as attendance rates this year.

State and Charter Schools – Regent Grove told the group that there is a State and Charter Schools committee meeting scheduled for April 18 on the appointment of the Chairman of the School for the Deaf Board of Trustees and the upcoming charter school review.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner McWalters reported on his testimony on NCLB at the Congressional Hearings in Washington saying that basically they want to know what Rhode Island intervention activities look like. Most states right now are wrestling with what to do at the individual school level versus the district level. The delegation asked about Rhode Island's SALT survey and visitation strategies, chart of accounts and In\$ite. The panel was also very interested in PS&I - the protocols, the information and the decision points. The Commissioner emphasized to the committee that the schools are not a one size fits all, so it is not so much compliance as it is the authority to bring resources and direction to the districts. He talked about how he made it clear that Rhode Island doesn't want the feds to walk away from NCLB. He said that it is the Bill of Rights for children.

Next, the Commissioner talked about the state budget hearings held during the week. Regent Camara testified before the House and talked about Board of Regents leadership and efficiency work. He told the Regents that the House has asked to re-visit the charter schools discussion including "mission drift" and they want to know about the Regents review of the schools.

Executive Agenda

As per R.I.G.L. 42-46-5-(2), the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m. for Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 6:50 pm. Chairman DiPrete reported that no votes had been taken in Executive Session.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the minutes of the meeting in Executive Session be sealed.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.