

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING – NOVEMBER 15, 2007**

A meeting of the Rhode Island 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 p.m.

In Attendance:

R. Flanders, P. Guida, R. Camara, A. Beretta and K. Forbes.

Public Remarks

Tim Duffy, Executive Director of the RI Association of School Committees, addressed the Board regarding school funding and cuts to state aid. He urged the Regents to “be sensitive to local concerns”; and to ensure that any proposed funding formula will treat all communities fairly and be a foundation based formula.

Charles Plant, the principal of the East Bay Metropolitan Career & Technical School, told the Board that he is concerned about the short fall for the East Bay Met School – which is just now going into its second year of operation with 60 students in attendance. He told the board about the many interesting programs in the school - especially Math and Science based programs; and reminded them that enrollment in the school is open to every high school student in the East Bay area. He urged the Regents to support the school.

Chairman's Remarks

Judge Flanders reported that he and Regent Davis had visited the Central Falls Learning Community Charter School and the Central Falls Middle School during the past week. He asked that Regent Callahan and any other interested Regents visit the school with a focus on their ELL programs.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, the minutes of the Rhode Island Board of Regents Meeting of October 25, 2007 be approved, as presented.

VOTE: Approved unanimously.

Endorsement of the Commissioner’s Recommendation on the Central Falls Council 94 Contract

Commissioner McWalters, along with Fran Gallo the Superintendent of the Central Falls School district, told board members that they had reached a tentative agreement with Council 94. Commissioner McWalters said that he had reviewed the agreement and forwarded it to the Board of Regents State and Charter School Committee for consideration.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Endorse the Commissioner’s Approval of the Central Falls Council 94 Contract, as Presented

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Members to the Central Falls Board of Trustees

RIDE staff member, Keith Oliveira briefly reviewed the backgrounds of the candidates for the Central Falls Board of Trustees - Mr. Vladimir Ibarra and Ms. Leslie Estrada and introduced them to the Board.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Appointments of Vladimir Ibarra and Leslie Estrada to the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of FY '09 Budget Transmittals

Commissioner McWalters reviewed the budget submittal process, including the submission of a "Regents budget" separate from the Department "Target budget". RIDE Director of the Office of Finance, Carolyn Dias explained to the members of the Board that the RIDE "Target" budget provides for an overall \$33.7M increase over the FY 2008 enacted budget, but provides only a nominal increase in education aid and other selected programs and reduces the Department and state schools by \$5.8M. The "Regents budget" is being submitted as a result of four Regents budget work sessions that resulted in a Regents recommendation to provide an increase in education aid and increases other selected programs such as charter aid, teacher retirement and school construction aid. It also provides a current service level budget that restores \$5.5M of the \$5.8M, but redirects \$2.7M to other core priorities. Additionally, following the BOR Finance Committee meeting last Thursday, Chairman Flanders met with the Governor and both agreed that the Regents proposed budget should request an additional 4% or \$6.5M., this increase reflects a more aggressive response to the urban initiative that was identified as missing in the budget. The districts currently receiving targeted aid – Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket will be guaranteed a 3% increase in total aid. The Regents' education aid budget proposal will now target and maximize the use of the funds where they are most needed, while providing statewide relief for all districts.

Regent Camara voiced his support of the Regents budget submission and said it supports student learning and education being a priority, while recognizing the state budget deficit.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves and Transmits a Regents FY 2009 budget proposal, as well as transmit, without approval, the Department's Target Budget prepared in accordance with the state Budget Office instructions.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Table of Organization

Commissioner McWalters presented a new Department of Education table of organization, as attached. He explained that the table reflects the department's efforts to focus on the priorities that emerged from the Board's retreat and internal management discussion about how best to organize for improved student results. The table also reflects the fiscal reality in which the department is working. The new table achieves focus in key priority areas and efficiencies by: consolidating two offices; reallocating staff to better align functions related to the priorities; and eliminating one of two Deputy Commissioner Positions. The group discussed the number of proposed changes in PS&I and the number of districts currently in intervention.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Table of Organization, as Presented.

Endorsement of Policy Framework for Career & Technical Education

Commissioner McWalters explained to the members of the Board that a study commissioned by a 2006 legislative grant to investigate and make recommendations regarding Rhode Island's career and technical education delivery system has been completed by the contractor, Charles Mojkowski of Technology Applications Associates. The work includes exhaustive local and national research of prevailing literature and best practice culminating in recommendations in five focal areas for an improved career and technical education delivery system aligned with RIDE's other strategic interests, i.e., high school reform, workforce development and pre-k – 16 initiatives. The document was reviewed and accepted by the Commissioner and staff, along with a Board of Regents Committee.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Endorses the Policy Framework for Career & Technical Education, as presented in Enclosure #8.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Report on Special Education Regulations Hearings

Commissioner McWalters reported that two public hearings on the proposed changes to the special education regulations were held on November 7th and 8th. Staff is working on summarizing the responses and will have them available for the Regents work session. There are two additional hearings scheduled for November 26 in Lincoln and December 3 in South Kingstown.

BOR Committee Reports

CASP – Regent Callahan reported that the CASP committee continues to work on tightening up the regulations. The group is schedule to meet for a final review on December 5th.

Educator Quality – Karin Forbes told the members of the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for November 28th at 2:00 pm

State & Charter Schools - The next charter Schools Committee meeting will be held on December 10th. The group will review the current charter schools law and discuss possible recommendation for the next legislative session.

Appeals Committee Meeting – Regent Amy Beretta reported that her committee had heard the Providence Variance appeal and will reconvene on December 27th to consider the issue.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner McWalters reported that he had been invited to present to the Senate on state aid for education, including the financing of urban and charter schools.

Executive Agenda

There was no Executive Session.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.