

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF MEETING – APRIL 23, 2008**

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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 & convened at 4:10 p.m.

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**In Attendance:**

R. Flanders, P. Guida, C. Callahan, A. Beretta, R. Camara, A. Cano-Morales, F. Caprio, A. Davis, K. Forbes.

Chairman Flanders called the meeting to order and welcomed Governor Carcieri who joined the Board to discuss the renewal of the Commissioner's contract. He then welcomed new board member, Anna Cano-Morales.

**Executive Session**

As per RIGL 42-46-4 & 5(a)(1) & (2), the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. for Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 4:35 p.m.

Vice Chairman, Patrick Guida reported that no votes had been taken in Executive Session.

**Approval of Commissioner's Contract**

**MOVED AND SECONDED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education extend the Contract of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education through June 30, 2009. This extension comes with recognition and appreciation for Peter McWalters' hard work and dedication throughout his tenure as Commissioner, celebration of his accomplishments on behalf of Rhode Island's education system and all of its students, and full support for the work he has agreed to do in the year to come to keep the Regents' agenda moving forward.

**VOTE:** Approved Unanimously

**Public Comments**

**Marcia Reback—President, RI Federation of Teachers** congratulated the commissioner and thanked the board for extending his contract. She told the members of the Board that the Commissioner has a "great vision for all of Rhode Island's kids" and he's been able to perform some "mini-miracles"; along with always being "respectful and inclusive." She congratulated him on behalf of AFT teachers and teacher aids. She then spoke in favor of the proposed certification fee structure and asked the Regents to adopt it except that individuals holding

more than one certificate shall pay \$100 for each additional certificate. She also expressed AFT support for the requirement that applications for certification and the payment of fees be done on line, effective immediately; that the requirement for a course in core content for certificate renewal not be dropped; and that the Regents join the CPAB for the purpose of public hearing on changes to the Vocational Education Certification Requirements.

**Bob Canavan – Past member of the Board of Regents** - thanked the Regents for extending the Commissioner’s contract and stated his support for the Regents agenda.

**Ron Walk – Education Week** – expressed his disappointment that Commissioner McWalters is leaving his position. Mr. Wolk told the members of the board that “He is the top administrator and the best chief in the country”; has led the way with performance based assessment; and sited the creation of the MET school as the “seed of education innovation”.

**Jackie Lamoureux ~ Library Media Specialist** urged the Regents to support school libraries.

**Nancy Cloud – ELL Advisory Counsel** – spoke to the Regents in support of the proposed ELL regulations; said that the development of the regulations had been a “good grass roots process”.

**Donna Tobin – Vice-president of the RI Schools Committees Association** - congratulated Peter on his retirement and offered her support of all of his hard work.

#### Chairman’s Remarks

Chairman Flanders asked Regents Amy Beretta and Angus Davis to co-chair a search committee for a new Commissioner and told the Board that they would be discussing a process.

#### Approval of Minutes of the Board of Regents

**MOVED AND SECONDED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Meeting of March 13, 2008 and Executive Session of March 13, 2008 as Presented.

**VOTE:** Approved Unanimously.

#### Approval of School Construction

Chairman of the Regents’ sub-committee Bob Camara introduced the agenda item and briefly highlighted the major pieces of the proposed regulations for the East Greenwich School District as follows:

a.	New Middle School	\$33,939,200
b.	Renovations to High School	\$7,795,000
c.	Renovations to Eldredge Elementary School	\$184,000
d.	Renovations to Hanaford Elementary School	\$688,000
e.	Renovations to Meadowbrook Farms Elem. School	\$1,601,000
f.	Renovations to Frenchtown Elementary School	\$165,000
g.	New improvements to High School Fields	\$3,603,635

He reminded the members of the Board that their approval on the necessity of school construction doesn't necessarily mean it will be funded by the General Assembly. Mr. Camara also explained to the Board that the improvements to the athletic fields have already been approved by the East Greenwich voters via a November 2006 bond. The group also discussed the Regents role in the approval of school construction. They were reminded that their only review is that the projects are in compliance with the new construction regulations and that there is a need. The issue of affordability is left to the General Assembly.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Necessity of School Construction Projects Totaling \$47,975,835, as Presented.**

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously.**

**Approval of the Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners for Purpose of Public Hearing**

Commissioner McWalters reminded the group that there had been three Regents work sessions on the English Language Learner regulations and that they were now ready to go out for public hearing.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve, for Public Hearing, the Regulations Governing English Language Learners, as Presented.**

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously.**

**Approval of Adoption of Mandatory Electronic Application for Educator Certification/Licensure**

Paula Jo Gaines, RIDE Director of the Office of Educator Quality, presented the agenda item for consideration. She explained that approval of this item will allow the certification office to accept electronic transcripts and reduce the paper and work load of the office. She also explained that within the next two years, all educators renewing their certificates will do so online through the Individual Professional Development Plan renewal system. Two public hearing were held and

there were no written or verbal comments received during the first – February 12, 2008; and during the second held on February 26, 2008, two human resource administrators from the Providence School Department gave verbal testimony in support of the proposal citing the need for continued updating to the State’s certification practices.

**MOVED AND SECONDED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Adopt the Requirement that Applications for Certification/Licensure and the Payment of Fees Must be Submitted Electronically, Effective Immediately.

**VOTE:** Approved Unanimously.

**Approval of Amendment of Pre-January 1, 2005 Certification Regulations so as to Allow the Renewal of Certificates by the Completion of Credits in Any Content Area.**

Again, Ms. Gaines presented the agenda item and described the proposed amendment to the Regents’ Regulations for Renewal of Certification so as to allow the renewal of certificates by the completion of credits in ANY Content area. There was a group discussion and clarification of the courses that can be taken.

**MOVED AND SECONDED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Amend Pre-January 1, 2005 Certification Regulations so as to Allow the Renewal of Certificates by the Completion of Credits in Any Content Area.

**VOTE:** Approved Unanimously.

(Regent Camara left at 5:25 p.m.)

**Committee Reports**

**Programs/School Improvement Committee** – Committee chairman, Patrick Guida told the group that this committee had met on April 16 to prioritize agenda items and priorities. He then announced that this committee will meet again on May 15 at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the approval of the Secondary Regulations. Other priority items include educator evaluation and the BEP.

**Appeals Committee** – Committee chair, Amy Beretta announced that the next meeting is scheduled for May 29.

**State & Charter Schools Committee**- Committee Chairman Angus Davis reported that this committee had met on April 9 to consider amendments to three Charter Schools - and the recommendations would be forwarded to the full Board for approval on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner McWalters told the Regents that the supplemental budget has passed and details would be forthcoming over the next couple of weeks
- There will be a math symposium on May 21<sup>st</sup> which will focus on alignment and tracking.
- A work session to discuss the approval of the Secondary Regulations is scheduled for May 15.
- He had attended a National Press Club commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "A Nation at Risk" in Washington earlier in the day.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.