

Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education
Minutes of October 1, 2008

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 4:15 p.m.

In Attendance:

R. Flanders, P. Guida, A. Beretta, A. Davis, A. Cano-Morales, K. Forbes, and B. Shimberg.

Public Remarks

There were no public remarks.

Chairman Remarks

a. **Board of Regents Partnership/Opportunities**

Chairman Flanders told the members of the Board that he had asked that this item be added to the agenda to discuss a protocol for Board members to respond to requests from vendors and stakeholders interested in promoting education related initiatives and/or products. Regent Forbes told the Board that about a year ago she and Regent Callahan were approached by then principal of the Textron Charter School, Rick Landau (currently the Director of Foundation Partnership, ConnectEdu Inc.) to look at a proposal for a computer based program to match students and colleges. Deputy Commissioner David Abbott talked to the group about “partnerships” versus “products”. He warned that the Regents need to be careful about endorsing one “product” over another. The group decided that going forward, any Regent that is approached to endorse a program or product will get input from staff, and if not satisfied with the staff recommendation will put the issue on the Regents’ agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Flanders presented the minutes of the September 3, 2008 meeting.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Minutes of the September 3 meeting.

VOTE: Approved unanimously.

Approval of Appeals

Chairman of the Board of Regents Appeals Committee, Amy Beretta told the members of the Board that, as per the request of William Hicks, consideration of William Hicks versus the Cumberland School Committee be held until the next meeting of the Board that considers appeals. There were no objections. Legal Counsel for the Board, Howard Haronian, joined the Regents and read each appeal, as presented.

Paul H. Botelho v. Providence School Board

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the in the Matter of Paul H. Botelho v. Providence School Board the Decision of the Commissioner is Affirmed.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Bethany St. Pierre v. Smithfield School Committee

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, in the Matter of Bethany St. Pierre v. Smithfield School Committee the Decision of the Commissioner is Affirmed.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Alternative Assessment Standard Setting in Science

RIDE Staff member, Cynthia Corbridge presented the agenda item for consideration. She explained to the Board that the alternate assessment being presented is for the 1% of Rhode Island students with significant cognitive disabilities. A committee of Rhode Island educators representing both general education and special education used a standards-setting process to make their determinations and recommendations. The group talked about Rhode Island's participation with New Hampshire, Minnesota, Montana and the University of Arizona to develop the assessment, which is a portfolio based assessment.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Accept the August 2008 Standard Setting Report for the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment in Science, and Approve Cut Points for Each of the Four Achievement Levels: Substantially Below Proficient, Partially Proficient, Proficient, or Proficient with Distinction.

Approval of Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs for Public Hearing

Deputy Commissioner, David Abbott explained to the members of the Board that the *Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs* has undergone their annual review by staff from the Departments of Education and Health. A number of changes were necessary to ensure alignment with current statutes, to promote best practices or to address emerging issues. Staff worked with various stakeholder groups over the past year to provide an opportunity for input and feedback regarding the revisions. Mr. Abbott previewed the main amendments to these regulations, as attached.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Proposed Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs, for Public Hearing.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Regents' Priorities

Chairman Flanders reviewed the "Regents Priorities", as discussed at the Board of Regents retreat. They include Hiring a new Commissioner; Implementing the new secondary regulations with clarity and guidance for districts, parents, and students; Strengthening educator quality through development of evaluation tools; Completing the revision of the Basic Education Program; Developing standards for high quality early childhood programs; Articulating guiding principles for an equitable and predictable education funding formula that Regents can support; and defining the scope of management rights and completing the Regents' work on collective bargaining. The group agreed that these are the priorities, as per their discussions and that there are not any additions or deletions. The Chairman asked that a report on the priorities be a regular agenda item. Commissioner McWalters told the group that the Department's work on the FY'09 and FY'10 budget has been built around the Regents' priorities. Regent Shimberg commented that the retreat should be held earlier next year to better inform the Board's budget discussions.

BEP Update

Deputy Commissioner, David Abbott reported that the BEP work group, which included educators, labor officials, RIDE staff and representatives of several professional organizations had met three times to draft recommendations for amendments to the BEP to be presented to the Board of Regents.

RIBOR Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2008

Page 3 of 3

In light of time constraints surrounding budgetary cuts and possible Caruolo actions, it was decided that the original work group would now shift from drafting to advisory and RIDE staff will begin re-drafting the BEP. Staff will keep the Board updated as work progresses so that Regents will have the opportunity to provide input. The amended BEP is expected to be completed for public hearing by January, 2009, with final approval by the Board in the spring of 2009.

As part of this discussion, Regent Cano-Morales asked Mr. Abbott about the status of the "Savage" decision and subsequent appeal. She also asked if the Board/Department should consider filing amicus briefs with the Court. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the issue would be placed on the agenda of the next Regents meeting.

Budget Update

RIDE Director of Finance, Carolyn Dias brought this agenda item forward to get ready for the BOR Finance Committee meeting scheduled on Wednesday, October 14 and 22nd. She told the members of the Board that on the 14th the Finance Committee will be discussing various budget proposals and the impact of each on the work. Ms. Dias said that the Board will also consider if they should submit one budget or if, as in previous years, they will submit a budget as per the state budget office requirements and a second budget supporting the requirements of the "work". The group also discussed, given the Regents priorities, how far can the budget be cut without compromising Board of Regents' goals.

Committee Reports

Program/School Improvement Committee - Regent Guida reported on the work of the Programs/School Improvement Committee and talked about the Secondary Regulations roll out sessions. So far, five sessions have been scheduled - East Greenwich, the Southern Collaborative, East Bay Collaborative, Cumberland High School, and Warwick.

Search Committee - Regents Beretta and Davis spoke to the group about the status of the Commissioner's Search Committee and reviewed the timeline of the search. The next "milestone" is the review of search firm/head hunter proposals. The approval of the search firm will be on the next Regents' agenda

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner McWalters reported that he will be participating in the NASBE Annual Conference in Washington on October 16 - 18. He will be part of a panel on the visibility of state boards.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.