

Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education
Minutes of December 10, 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 4:10 p.m.

In Attendance:

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

Public Remarks

Doreen Corrente, Executive Director of the RICSL urged the members of the Board to approve the Leadership Standards, as proposed. Ms. Corrente told the Board that the standards have been reviewed and endorsed by the RI Center for School Leadership.

Michael Trophy, Rep. Susan Story, Civics Education Commission - re: Civics Education. Representative Story told the group that Rhode Island is only one of two states that do not have approved civic education standards and urged the Regents to endorse the standards, as proposed. Mr. Trophy distributed legislation on civic education and urged the Regents to approve the standards and to consider establishing a civic assessment.

Mary Canole, representing the RI Association of School Leaders, urged the passage of the standards with the original language. She asked that the Regents not remove the reference to teacher leaders which will "cut off the pipe line" for future leaders.

Chairman Remarks

There were no Chairman Remarks.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Flanders presented the minutes of the November 6, 2008 meeting.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Minutes of the November 6, 2008.

VOTE: Approved unanimously.

Approval of Appeal

William Hicks v. Cumberland School Committee

Chairman of the Board of Regents Appeals Committee, Amy Beretta read the decision of William Hicks versus Cumberland, as attached.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, in the matter of William Hicks v. The Cumberland School Committee the Decision of the Commissioner is Reversed and the Termination Action of the Cumberland School Committee is Sustained.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Civics Standards

The Director of Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, MaryAnn Snider presented the proposed Civic GSE's, as attached. She explained that in 2005 the RI General Assembly addressed the need for a unified civic education program by modifying RIGL 16-22-2 to mandate the creation of grade span expectations in civic education to be implemented statewide by August 31, 2007. The GSE's, as presented, were developed following input from K-12 and higher education teachers, education professionals, and representatives from local historical and service learning organizations. The proposed standards identify the content knowledge and

skills expected of all students from kindergarten through high schools. They are based primarily on the National Standards for Civics and Government and are grouped under eight statements of knowledge which address government (origins, forms, purposes and development and change over time); U.S. government (local, state, national and democratic values and principles on which it is based); citizens' rights and responsibilities; political systems, political processes, civil society, the interconnection of the world community (benefits, challenges, the impact of peoples' choices on everyone); interpretation of history; connections in and of history to present day (connection between past and present, events and conditions, change over time, RI history); and how the study of history leads to understanding the present and shaping the future (personal connections in an historical context, RI history).

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Adopts the Rhode Island Grade Span Expectations for Civics and Government and Historical Perspectives (Rhode Island History), as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously

Approval of Leadership Standards

Director of Educator Quality and Certification, PaulaJo Gaines told the members of the Board that her office, along with the RIDE office of Diverse Learners, Secondary Reform and Progressive Support and Intervention have worked with the Rhode Island Center for School Leadership to develop a set of standards for school and central office leaders. The Board of Regents previously reviewed a draft set of standards and voted to send them to public hearing. The Certification Policy Advisory Board also reviewed the draft standards and agreed to jointly host the public hearings. Hearings were held on September 23, 2008 and October 2, 2008. Overall, public testimony was positive; CPAB recommended that all references to "teacher leadership" be removed and separate Teacher Leadership Standards be developed.

The proposed standards outline the knowledge, skills and dispositions for educators who assume leadership responsibilities. They are based upon the national Interstate Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and are grouped to address the following areas: mission, vision and goals, learning and teaching; managing organizational systems and safety; collaborating with key stakeholders; ethics and integrity; and the education system.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Adopts the Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Endorsement of Profile for New Commissioner

Co-chair of the Board of Regents Commissioner Search Committee, Angus Davis distributed the "Profile" of characteristics to be used in the recruitment of the next Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and introduced the firm that will be handling the search for the Commissioner, Ray & Associates. Representing the firm were Alvin Johnson and Dr. William Adams. Regent Davis told the members of the Board that the document will serve as the basis for the Committee's advertising, recruiting, interviewing and screening, to provide the Board with the best qualified applicants for review and selection. Next, Mr. Davis reviewed the steps in the development of the profile. He told the members of the board that the profile was developed based on the deliberations of the search committee, along with comments heard at several forums which

included students, parents, teachers, administrators, social service providers, advocates for special populations and diverse learners, labor leaders, school board members, and elected officials; and then reviewed by the members of the Board.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Endorses the Profile for New Commissioner, as discussed.

Vote: Approved Unanimously.

Commissioner's Search ~ Update

The next two meetings of the search committee will be held on January 14 (the committee will begin to flesh out interview questions) and February 11 (the committee will rank the finalists for interviews.)

Discussion of Paul Cuffee Charter School

Regent Davis reported to the group that the State and Charter School Committee has met a couple of times with Cuffee to discuss their request to expand their enrollment and add a high school. However, because of the lack of funding this year, the committee did not recommend that the school be expanded to include high school. David Bournes, Head of School, representing the Cuffee School told the Board that the school understands that there is no money available this year to allow the high school to open in the fall, however, Cuffee remains "ready to go." Mr. Bournes expressed concern that the funding will be completely lost if the expansion is delayed along with the concern that, with the loss of the 8th graders, there will be no mentors for younger students. He asked that the Regents "go on the record" that, when funding is available, Cuffee will be able to open their high school. The Regents discussed the funding of the charter schools, in general, and more specifically the need to change the funding formula. They agreed to keep Cuffee on the forefront when money becomes available.

Legislative Update

RIDE staff member, Andy Andrade distributed materials for possible legislation for 2009, along with a list of newly elected legislators. Next, the group reviewed some of the DRAFT legislation – teachers strike legislation; first grade eligibility legislation; transportation mandate legislation; PSI legislation; teacher notification legislation; and dismissal for cause legislation. Mr. Andrade told the group that he will be scheduling a meeting for the Regents with the legislative leadership and if the Regents would like to walk around the state house before the beginning of a session, to let him know and he will set it up.

Update on Secondary Regulations Roll Out

Roy Seitsinger, the Director of RIDE Middle and High School Reform, told the Board that he has been meeting with the RI Middle Level Educators, RI School Superintendents Association, RI Association of Secondary School Principals, East Greenwich School Committee and Providence School Committee on the Secondary Regulations/high school graduation requirements. Additionally, Department personnel have met with SORICO, the East Bay Collaborative, Cumberland HS, Cranston Area Career and Technical Center; and in January and February will work with districts on dropout prevention and the Commissioner's review.

BOR Committee Reports

Besty Shimberg, Chairman of the BOR Finance Committee, has been working with staff on possible budget savings;

Patrick Guida, Chairman of the BOR Programs/School Improvement Committee, reported on his committee's work on the funding formula and said that his group will be meeting on Monday, December 15 on the guiding principals.

Angus Davis – State and Charter School Committee – reported that his committee is very concerned about the quality of the program and environment at the RI School for the Deaf. He told the group that RIDE Director of Special Needs, Ken Swanson is working with the school. Additionally the State and Charter School group will be beginning work on cleaning up the charter school evaluation process (for new proposals) and will be developing accountability contract.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner McWalters reported that:

- Department FTEs have not yet been approved, but “we need to keep moving on that”;
- The NECAP tests that were administered in October will be available in January; and reminded the Regents that it is a critical year for the PSI districts, especially Central Falls, Providence and Woonsocket;
- Told the members of the Board that an editorial had appeared in the Providence Journal saying that he had used state money to travel first class to Washington, DC. Mr. McWalters explained that CCSSO had asked him to go to Washington to talk about education issues, and had arranged and paid for his trip.
- There will be a conference on Monday & Tuesday to speak about RI's GSE's.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.