

# BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Meeting held at  
Woonsocket Middle School Hamlet Library  
60 Florence Drive  
Woonsocket, RI 02895**

**Thursday, March 3, 2011 - 4:00 p.m.**

## MINUTES

**Attending: R. Flanders (chairman), P. Guida, A. Beretta, C. Callahan, B. Shimberg, A. Cano-Morales, K. Forbes**

**Absent: Frank Caprio and Angus Davis**

**The meeting convened at 4:12 p.m.**

Chairman Flanders welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Woonsocket School Department for hosting it. He also noted that the meeting was being videotaped and that all meetings will be taped and posted on the RIDE Website to make Regents' proceedings open and available to all. He also requested consent to re-order some of the agenda items, moving public remarks to be first on the agenda.

### Public Remarks

Frank Forleo, Assistant Director, Talent Development Program at the University of Rhode Island, stated that, although he has no faith on high stakes testing, he commended the Board of Regents and Commissioner Gist for the level of professionalism to which they brought to the Secondary School Regulations public-review process.

Denise Auclair, Woonsocket parent and PAC Co-Chair, voiced her concern about the budget cuts going on in Woonsocket at a time when the State is requiring so much of its students. All-day kindergarten programs have been cut in Woonsocket, and education is suffering as a result. Parents are considering sending their children to private schools.

Patricia Hines, Executive Director, R.I. Association of School Principals (RIASP), thanked the Regents for listening and addressing the Association's concerns during the public-hearing process for the Secondary School Regulations. She also clarified how RIASP was not in support of the letter submitted by the Learning First Alliance RI (LFARI) in opposition of the Secondary School Regulations. As a result, RIASP requested LFARI to retract the letter it sent without the consent of its member organizations.

Julie Nora, President, R.I. League of Charter Schools, thanked the departing Regents for their expertise and support of charter public schools over the years. She also expressed the League's support for the new Charter School Regulations, which were presented for approval that evening.

Althea Forcier, parent of 3 students in the Woonsocket schools, voiced her concern over the lack of full-day programs in urban districts and suggested that the state mandate full-day kindergarten in struggling districts and put a freeze instead on all the required unfunded mandates.

Elizabeth Burke-Bryant, Executive Director, Rhode Island Kids Count, thanked the Regents for all of the public hearings held throughout the state. She was truly inspired by the level of engagement by the students who attended the hearings. She was impressed by how the BOR listened and addressed the various concerns as reflected in the new Regulations. She also thanked the departing members for the incredible service they provided over the years to the children of Rhode Island, and she welcomed the new members.

Mary-Ellen Butke, Executive Director, RI-CAN, shared her gratitude to each and every member of the Board for their expertise and leadership in tackling many hard challenges and the sometimes hard decisions they had to make to back off when the decisions weren't the right ones.

Stephen Hourahan, Senior Advisor to the Governor, on behalf of Governor Chafee thanked the outgoing members of the Board of Regents for their time and dedication to the Rhode Island public-education system and welcomed the new members to the Board.

Chairman Flanders thanked the outgoing members of the Board for their years of service to the children of Rhode Island and welcomed Mat Santos and Carolina Bernal, who were present at the meeting, to the Board.

## APPROVAL ITEMS

### Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by B. Shimberg it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the

February 3, 2011 – Board of Regents Meeting  
February 10, 2011 – Board of Regents Work Session  
February 17, 2011 – Board of Regents Work Session

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

1. **Approval of Waiver request pursuant to RIGL 16-2-3, entitled *Emergency reduction of school year, submitted by the Gloucester School Department***

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by P. Guida it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves this request for a two (2) day reduction in the aggregate number of school days for the 2010-11 school year, and I make this recommendation with condition that the two (2) day reduction will only be implemented in the event of additional cancelations that result in the need to extend the 2010-2011 school year to June 28, 2011.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

2. **Approval of Waiver request pursuant to RIGL 16-2-3, entitled *Emergency reduction of school year, submitted by the Foster-Glocester School Department***

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by C. Callahan it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Request on the condition that the two (2) day reduction will only be implemented in the event of additional cancellations that result in the need to extend the 2010-11 school year to June 28, 2011.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously**

**3. Approval of Waiver request pursuant to RIGL 16-2-3, entitled *Emergency reduction of school year, submitted by the Foster School Department***

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by A. Beretta it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the within request on the condition that the school district provides no less than the net remaining schools days in the 2010-11 school year pursuant to RIGL 16-2-3.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

**Approval of the Proposed Secondary School Regulations:**

Commissioner Gist presented the Secondary School Regulations that were up for approval, including the three motions. She also emphasized the fact that the decisions that were up for approval were shared with the new Board of Regents members as well as with the Governor and his staff. She commended everyone for their commitment to the process, on behalf of the people of Rhode Island.

Andrea Castañeda went over the document and stressed how the amended regulations call for continuous aggressive, durable, meaningful, and measurable improvement for student outcomes while maintaining the intent of the reform initiative.

Regent Guida requested that the regulations include a new statement to be introduced to L-6-3.5 that provides LEAs with the right to establish a system for the management of student-level requests to retake the state assessment for the purpose of earning a Regent’s commendation.

Members of the Board shared a couple of minor suggestion and concerns, which were addressed by Ms. Castañeda, and Commissioner Gist asked Deputy Abbott to clarify that the new suggestions did not require having to go back out for public hearing.

Regent Callahan thanked and commended the Board and RIDE for addressing many of the concerns that were raised at the public hearings and also shared her concern that RIDE did not adequately address the conjunctive system versus the compensatory system. She has great reservations about the conjunctive system's putting too much emphasis on the statewide assessment.

Chairman Flanders stated that the new regulations are not cast in stone and that he is confident that it will be an ongoing process that would not end that evening.

**Approval of the Secondary School Regulations and Motions**

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by A. Cano-Morales it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the amended Secondary School Regulations, with minor adjustments

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 1 member voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: Colleen Callahan

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the motion on the scaled score associated with the performance standard "Partially Proficient" as a graduation requirement beginning with the graduating class of 2014. This requirement shall apply to student performance on the state assessment in the areas of reading and mathematics.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by K. Forbes it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the motion on designate the minimum improvement required to reach progress toward proficiency to be at or beyond the threshold of statistical significance, as calculated by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Students reaching or exceeding statistically significant improvement, expressed as the difference in an individual student’s scaled-score performance between the first and subsequent administrations of the state assessment, will meet the graduation requirements set forth in Section L-6-3.3.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by P. Guida it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the motion **to** establish achievement at or above the scaled score associated with the performance standard “proficient” on the state assessment in reading and mathematics **and** completion of local graduation requirements as the minimum criteria necessary for earning a Regents’ commendation.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

## **Approval of Charter School Regulations:**

Commissioner Gist gave an update and overview on the Charter School Regulations:

- The regulations define the governance structures for Rhode Island's charter public schools.
- They outline authority, timelines, and general rules for all major areas of charter-school policy not covered adequately in the charter-school statute.
- The regulations now sufficiently define the establishment of charter public schools, amendments to existing charters, variances and waivers for and/or exemptions from compliance with state policies and ongoing oversight of charter programming in the state.
- The regulations also provide a clear process for procedural actions such as charter-school outreach, dissemination of information on lottery and enrollment processes, and charter revocation and expiration.
- At the two public hearings held over the last several weeks, testimony from a number of stakeholders in and around the charter-school community was heard.
- RIDE received oral and written comments from leaders in our charter public schools, our state charter organizations, teachers, parents, and even a representative from a nationally recognized organization who regularly advises states on charter-policy development.
- The team in the Office of Transformation worked in collaboration with both internal and external RIDE partners to consider and process the information received.
- The regulations have been revised to reflect the thoughtful commentary provided through the hearings.
- Feedback from members of the Board of Regents present at the hearings, representatives of legal agencies who support our charter public schools, as well as advocates for our charters was considered as well.
- The revised regulations now provide the framework for the implementation of our full authorization protocol.

Jennifer Smith, Chief Transformation Officer, also clarified some of the questions and concerns from members of the Board of Regents.

On a motion duly made by Chairman Flanders and seconded by C. Callahan it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approved the Charter School Regulations, as attached.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Anna Cano- Morales, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

NAYS: 0

### **Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Gist thanked Chairman Flanders for his leadership through an historic time in Rhode Island public education. She wished him the best and thanked him for his public service as he moves on to another challenge as the appointed Receiver for the City of Central Falls.

She took a moment to recognize Regents Beretta and Cano-Morales, as well as Regent Davis who was absent, for their complete dedication to the students and families of Rhode Island, and she wished them well in their future endeavors.

She also welcomed the opportunity for a great working relationship with newly nominated Chairman Caruolo and the newly nominated members to the Board, Regents Adrain, Bernal, Carothers, and Santos.

Before starting with her usual updates, Commissioner Gist introduced Daniel McNulty, a Woonsocket High School student who's a Rhode Island pioneer.

Daniel has done everything expected of our high-school graduates. He has completed his coursework, done a very fine electronic portfolio of his work, and participated in state assessments.

He has done volunteer community service at the Bernon Heights school library. He designs video games, and he has a passion for classic rock.

What makes Daniel a pioneer is that he is the first Rhode Island public high-school graduate to receive his schooling through an e-learning program.

Because of health problems, Daniel has done most of his high-school coursework on line or from a hospital bed.

Daniel has been able to complete his schoolwork and graduate with his class thanks to the E-Learning Academy, run out of the Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center.

Michael Ferry, coordinator of instructional technology in Woonsocket, has been the guiding force behind this exciting new program.

After graduation, Daniel plans to enter CCRI and then continue his education at a four-year college or university.

**Next, Commissioner Gist gave an update on the status of existing charters and potential requests for amendments to charters:**

### **Renewals**

- 1) There are three schools up for renewal this spring: Blackstone Academy, New England Laborer's Career and Construction Academy (NELs), and the Compass School.

The Transformation Team has met face-to-face with leaders at Blackstone and Compass to discuss current performance as well as proficiency targets for each school moving forward.

The New England Laborers (NELs) is also up for renewal this spring, but its meeting was postponed several times due to inclement weather. The new date of the meeting is March 9, 2011.

Each school will have a brief visit from a team convened by the Transformation Office to gather additional evidence to inform decisions about its renewal recommendation to the Board for these schools.

### **New Applicants/Letters of Interest**

- 2) There are no new applications for schools to open in Fall 2011. R.I. Nurses Institute Middle College has been approved and is on track for an on time opening.
  - The Transformation Team recently met with community stakeholders, higher education, and organization leaders directly connected with the development of programming at the school.
  - An application from the leadership for a planning grant to support the growth and development of the middle college is expected to arrive soon.
- 3) We have received full applications from the following groups that submitted LOIs in December: Achievement First Rhode Island Mayoral Academies and Ocean State Stem Academy.
  - These schools, if approved, would open in the Fall of 2012.

- As part of the new regulations, every school will have an entire year to meet compliance requirements, train essential staff, and become fully prepared to serve students well.
- An updated application from Meeting Street has also been received.

### **Charter School Program Grant/Race to the Top**

- 4) RIDE is in the throes of planning for public dissemination of the applications for grant funds available through both the Race to the Top and federal charter-school program grant funds.
  - Through closer connections with charter public schools in the state and familiarity with the strong programming present in several, applications for these funds are expected from:
    - o Paul Cuffee High School;
    - o International Charter School;
    - o The Learning Community (Central Falls School District partnership); and
    - o RIMA Blackstone Valley Preparatory Middle School.

### **Expansions**

- 5) RIDE has also been in conversation with some schools about the prospect of expanding their current enrollments.
  - These schools will make formal application to the Board of Regents over the next several months to receive approval of their expansion requests.
  - Note that all schools seeking expansion will be fully reviewed by the Transformation Team to determine the merits of their applications prior to submission.
  - Only schools with proven track records of student success will be brought before the Regents for consideration.
  - RIDE has received or expects to receive expansion requests from International Charter School, Blackstone Academy, and Segue.

### **RTTT Update:**

- RIDE has been providing the Board of Regents with monthly updates on RTTT implementation.
  - o Regents received a 6-month update that spans August 24, 2010 (when we found out we were awarded the grant) to the end of February 2011.

- RIDE presented a brief written report on the progress made over the last six months.
- RIDE will post this report on the RIDE Web site so that it is widely accessible and helps this work to be as transparent as possible.
- RIDE also provided a more basic version of this update to the RTTT Steering Committee at its meeting February 11.
- The Commissioner highlighted some of what is contained in the six-month implementation update document:
  - August 24 - November 22, 2010, was our “90-day planning period” with the U.S. Department of Education (USED) and our LEAs.
  - Together, we developed and completed each LEA’s scope of work and a state scope of work, which are the plans that will guide our work over the four years of the RTTT grant.
  - RIDE must submit a complete individual budget from each LEA before receiving final approval.
  - Completed LEA budgets were due to RIDE on March 1, 2011.
  - RIDE is reviewing each LEA’s budget and will submit approved budgets to USED by March 15, 2011.
  - Over the past six months, RIDE has worked closely with its assigned RTTT program officer and others at USED to understand the requirements of the grant.
    1. move toward the approval of our scopes of work;
    2. submit amendments to our RTTT plan where needed; and
    3. report RIDE’s progress on a monthly basis.
  - In the scopes of work, LEA leaders were asked to identify “adaptive challenges” that they anticipated in implementing Race to the Top – complex challenges and shifts from the current way of doing things that would need to be addressed in order to successfully carry out the initiatives in RTTT.
  - As part of RIDE’s performance-monitoring process, we plan to organize LEAs into collaborative learning groups focused on outcomes, where they can formally share with one another what’s working and where they’re struggling, addressing challenges together as they arise.

- RIDE is working on finalizing a performance-monitoring plan, which will be due to USED April 29, 2011.
- Educator Evaluation: For several months, more than 100 educators have worked with RIDE on developing the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System.
  1. RIDE also had the help of a technical advisory committee of experts. RIDE and the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals are working to combine the evaluation systems into one model.
  2. In early February, the first full draft of the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System was posted on the RIDE Web site and released to a variety of stakeholders.
  3. RIDE is now meeting with small groups of educators to engage in deep conversations around the working draft that we distributed.
  4. RIDE is field-testing the evaluation system in three LEAs - two traditional districts and one charter public school.
- Study of the Standards: Intermediary service providers have been prepared, over the course of three days of training by the Dana Center, to deliver the Study of the Standards training to educators.
  1. RIDE has developed the training protocols, tools, and processes for the Study of the Standards.
  2. RIDE continues to complete the LEA schedule for Study of the Standards training to occur this year.
- At this time, RIDE has filled 10 of the 20 positions supported by RTTT; RIDE continues to plan for and recruit the other 10 positions.
- UPD Consulting is leading us through the process of developing these RFPs, and, with LEA input on what is needed within each of the services we are seeking, the RFPs will attract qualified vendors with services that match our needs. RFPs will be released throughout the months of March and April.

### **Budget Update -**

- The Governor will deliver his Budget Address to the General Assembly on Tuesday, March 8, at 7:00 p.m.
- RIDE will have an update at the March 17 work session.

## **Legislative Update -**

- The General Assembly has been on winter recess and reconvened on Tuesday, March 1, 2011.
- 57 bills relating to education have been introduced thus far.

Commissioner Gist met with Rep. Tomasso to explain RIDE's ongoing efforts to monitor the financial impact of RTTT on school districts and to keep stakeholders informed on the process through the Steering Committee. Rep. Tomasso agreed to withdraw her legislation to create an RTTT oversight committee.

**Adjournment:** With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.