



**Enclosure 3a**  
**June 19, 2018**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION**  
**May 9, 2018**

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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Board of Education Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to Special Work Session of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, noted for the record that Council Chair McConaghy and Council Member Martinez would not be joining the meeting, noted a quorum was not present, and called the Special Work Session to order at 5:31 p.m.

**Present:** Barbara Cottam, \*Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Gara Field, \*\*Jo Eva Gaines, and \*\*\*Lawrence Purtill

**Absent:** Daniel McConaghy and Marta Martinez

\* Arrived at 5:49 p.m.

\*\* Arrived at 5:40 p.m.

\*\*\* Arrived at 5:50 p.m.

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Cottam suspended the vote on agenda acceptance until after a quorum was present. The vote took place at the end of the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the May 15, 2018, Special Work Session

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

**2. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island - Second Read by the Council**

Commissioner Wagner framed the conversation by sharing that RIDE felt there were some specific areas that had not yet been highlighted, so wanted to start with those and then leave as much time as possible for discussion. He then turned the conversation over to Lisa Foehr, Director of the Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services.

Ms. Foehr proposed to begin the discussion on the topic of Professional Learning section as it was a large component of the proposal. She proposed that she would ask and answer a few general questions around professional learning and then lead into some more detailed questions.

RIDE is looking to develop a larger professional learning ecosystem and to infuse and invigorate the professional learning system around Rhode Island, including the implementation of professional endorsements. Then there would be building out an Educator Course Network to support the professional learning piece, and ultimately building the requirement into the certification regulations that professional learning would become part of someone's renewal. "Ultimately," in this case, meaning that this was something that RIDE was working toward over time. It was confirmed that the current proposed regulations do not decouple educator evaluation ratings from certification renewal at the state level. The reason is that RIDE found that there was not general consensus among the stakeholders that the two should be decoupled.

Ms. Foehr presented the first question for the Council to explore as focused around the concept of introducing professional learning back into certification requirements, as Rhode Island has not had professional learning requirements tied to certification for six years. Commissioner Wagner expressed that RIDE's intent to show that we are committed to improving schools by having a strategy around continuous learning and growth, since that has been shown through research to be the most effective strategy around, provided it is done thoughtfully as a coherent statewide strategy and has learned from past experience. This proposal would be to introduce as a new component professional learning requirement tied to the renewal of certification and to determine the extent to which the state can help facilitate. As it is now, superintendents have sole discretion, in accordance with collective bargaining agreements, over professional learning for their educators. If something is already included in a CBA, that would take place as stipulated in the CBA. Most districts in the state already built in 2-3 days of professional learning as a result of their CBA. Between the contractual days, other embedded opportunities, and common planning time, most educators will be in a good place to meet the requirements, especially with the additional supports planned.

Commissioner Wagner expressed that the most valuable model for professional learning is that of communities of practice for educators (a time model) while the current model that is most popular is the expertise model where an expert comes in from outside the system. Some districts offer a menu of options from which the teachers select professional development; others choose the professional development for everyone. The Educator Course Network is intended to provide a menu – perhaps as a result of an RFI – of options for educators and districts. RIDE is planning to convene a set of stakeholders across the state to help coordinate this. This model of professional learning is intended as a teacher pathway model.

Ms. Foehr walked through the proposed regulations starting on page 57. Section A establishes that professional learning requirement as part of the renewal to underscore the importance of ongoing learning. Section B establishes the requirement of educators being responsible for the completion of professional learning units, including financial responsibility of things that are not otherwise provided by the local education agency. Section C covers the categories of opportunities that count within the professional learning system, starting with the responsibility of superintendents (approval of opportunities by superintendents or committees on behalf of the superintendent) and then covering the categories for professional learning. On page 58, RIDE was attempting to build in a guard rail around the sustained learning by defining what sustained means (e.g., 10 or more hours in length, topical over time, split over multiple days) based on what research says and also on what we have heard. Early in the process, RIDE convened a group of superintendents and assistant superintendents and asked for feedback about local record keeping and administration to manage this professional learning requirement at the local level. During that conversation, even districts that knew they had some infrastructure work to do in order to carry this out had expressed that they still thought that it would be worth it to do.

Ms. Foehr expressed that the details in the proposal are based on research stating that one-shot professional learning is less effective than professional learning sustained over time. Setting only 75% (or whatever the number will be) of professional learning as sustained allows that there may be some one-shot professional learning opportunities that do provide value. The list of categories for types of professional learning in the document is not meant to be exhaustive of all the available options, but to set some guard rails that still allow for flexibility. The intent is for the regulations to not be too prescriptive (e.g., specific things that professional learning must or must not be) but also to not be too loose (e.g., hourly requirement only), while respecting that these regulations relate to a license that is job-related.

The goal is to have stronger, more robust local systems of professional learning to ensure that sufficient professional learning is available and approvable. Ideally, there could be collaboration across districts. The professional learning is designed to be about competencies rather than seat time. Districts can choose whether to pre-approve an opportunity or whether to approve it after a teacher has participated in it. If a teacher appeals a superintendent's decision to not approve a professional learning opportunity and the teacher's license is at risk for not meeting the professional learning requirement, there would be an appeals process where the teacher would appeal to the Commissioner. If the Commissioner's decision is appealed, that would go before the Council for a decision. While that occurs, there is a proposed option for a one-time special or provisional certificate that is valid for one year that can be granted. The teacher would then have a year to get back on track with their professional learning plan, and then at the end of that renewal cycle, they would reapply for the same professional level they had before the provisional certificate.

Ms. Foehr then provided an overview of the appendix. Main topics included:

- Certification expiration date moved from August 31 to July 31 to reduce issues arising from renewal at the same time as the school year beginning; in the first year of implementation, this would result in teachers' professional learning for the summer potentially counting toward two different years (beginning of summer vs. end of summer)
- The two-week grace period after expiration becomes a year-long grace period in order to take assessments needed for certification; this only applies to tests that have never been taken
- The current requirement is that after 5 years, teachers are subjected to a full review to reinstate an expired certificate; the proposal is to move that to 10 years
- For special education director, there had been a requirement that a full administrator/principal certification had to be held; that requirement will no longer be a prerequisite, as the director certificate will include some additional administrative requirements
- American Sign Language will be formally recognized as a foreign language
- Proposing that 20% of a teacher's assignment could be in a content area or grade level for which they are not certified; the superintendent would determine qualification, the teacher would demonstrate competency in the area, and there be a mutual agreement for the teacher to take the assignment
- Currently, a CTE educator would not be able to add special education certification; the proposal opens up their ability to also be certified as special educators
- Some particular special education certificates are only eligible elementary and secondary; the proposal expands this to all grades teachers (e.g., arts, health/physical education)
- Now allow an ESL-certified teacher to teach the English side of a two-teacher model of a dual-language program

- Instead of listing the educator standards, replacing that with a statement about an educator being responsible to maintain what is outlined in the appropriate set of standards that RIDE approves and publishes, so that if the standards' name changes the full regulations do not need to be reopened to correct that one piece
- Change will be made to tighten up the reporting misconduct language where misconduct would have some impact on licensure status
- Introducing definitions for substitutes: day to day (temporary) versus long-term assignment to provide some guidelines and provide consistency

Commissioner Wagner identified the potential next step of having a formal public comment process take place after the summer (e.g., begin in September) to ensure sufficient time for the Council to discuss, make changes, and then vote to post for the formal public comment period. The regulations' effective date may change as a result.

Council Members expressed support for the concept and importance of professional learning and supporting professional learning communities. They also indicated the need to see what is currently taking place and hear from educators about their professional learning experiences and offerings, and expressed strong concerns about the re-institution of a mandate could stifle this good idea if implemented badly. Council Members expressed concerns about the details of the proposal for the regulations (e.g., the quantity of time), and how that would be implemented (e.g., definition setting and cost in terms of resources and time). Members also cautioned that the "guard rails" or guidelines, because they would be implemented by people, could simply turn into a checklist of requirements that defeats the purpose of professional learning. Council Members expressed concerns about the criteria to determine what professional learning is without being too prescriptive, including differentiating between administrative and committee meetings and whether teachers leading trainings would count toward professional learning units. Members also raised the question of how collective bargaining agreements fit into how professional learning opportunities are handled at the local level. Council Members expressed concern about a teacher being able to be assigned to teach in a content area for which they aren't certified, both due to qualifications and also to teachers being forced into an assignment.

**ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.**

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns.

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

Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,  
Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0