



RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The first work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education was held on Thursday, April 4th, 2013, at the Department of Education, Room 501, 255 Westminister Street, Providence, 02903. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Present: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

Absent: Patrick A. Guida and William C. Maaia

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the work session of April 4, 2013.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chair Mancuso explained that these work sessions are designed for the members of the Board of Education to receive detailed information on the items they will be asked to approve at the next meeting of the board (coming up on Monday, April 8th).

Because Commissioner Gist was held up in another meeting, Chair Mancuso asked Associate Commissioner for Finance and Management Susan LaPanne to begin with **Item 2f – Refinancing of Several RIHEBC Revenue Bonds at URI to Achieve Savings**. The board would take up Items 2a-2e after Commissioner Gist's arrival.

Dr. LaPanne explained that a working group of administration and finance staff at the three public higher education institutions work with the Office of Higher Education to provide regular surveys of the fiscal environment for refinancing opportunities in order to save money. The team determined that a significant savings of almost \$500,000 a year could be secured with refinancing. There are no drawbacks to the refinances.

Michael Grande asked whether the refinances would save interest or stretch our principal and learned that we would continue paying the principal but saving interest. Bond counsel Normand Benoit from Partridge, Snow & Hahn, LLP confirmed that the average life of the principal would

not be extended. The bonds would have the same average life but fixed rates would be dropped, showing a savings of approximately 10% stated at net present value.

Item 2g – FY '13 Mid-Year Budget, Tuition Fees, and Tables of Organization for URI, RIC, CCRI, and the Office of Higher Education.

Dr. LaPanne informed the Board of a mid-year process to review activities based on actual, rather than projected, enrollment figures and tuition and fees paid. She explained the difference in unrestricted (tuition and state appropriations) versus restricted funds (auxiliary and enterprise funds such as room and board, bookstores, and parking).

A decrease of \$418,000 in state appropriations has reduced fringe benefit costs administered by the state, but operations have not been affected per se. General obligation debt service has increased.

A brief PowerPoint presentation handed out to board members showed the specific information on all funds in the system (enactment versus mid-year), including comparing tuition and fees in Fiscal Years 2012, 2013 and 2014. The Board was reminded that tuition will be frozen across the system for FY 2014, so there will be no difference between the requested and enacted budget in that area. While tuition is frozen, however, student aid becomes a significant line item. Student aid has actually increased for FY 2013 and 2014, aiding students out of general and education funds. At URI, the student aid contributed by the University actually exceeds the funds appropriated by the state.

The last page of the presentation compares the tuition and fees for Rhode Island's institutions to their New England peers. The tuition is high but comparatively low. Coincidentally, Rhode Island ranks 8th highest for cost of public higher education but 8th lowest for receipt of state support for higher education – which is not a surprise as these are the two significant sources of revenue for institutions. However, Dr. LaPanne also noted that Governor Chafee should be praised for putting funds back into the system's budget.

Colleen Callahan asked for a comparison of peer institutions that included some nearby states outside New England where URI attendees come from, such as New Jersey. The Board will receive that information in the presentation for Monday's board meeting. President Dooley added that URI regularly monitors non-resident tuition rates compared to other institutions. URI strives to keep their non-resident rate lower than other states' to attract non-RI students, while still bringing in tuition dollars to offset the subsidized in-state URI rate. (Chair Mancuso added that the RIBGHE's Finance, Facilities and Management Committee, of which she had been a member, struggled not to price out out-of-state students.) Right now, URI's advertising stretches all the way to Florida on billboards. Dr. Dooley also said URI might be the only flagship university in the country that has frozen tuition for next year.

Item 2h – Creation of a Nurse Anesthetist Program at RIC School of Nursing in Conjunction with the St. Joseph Hospital School of Anesthesia for Nurses

On behalf of President Carriuolo, Vice President for Academic Affairs Ron Pitt gave some background on the proposal, which is a process that began three years ago and received favorable reviews. St. Joseph Hospital's nursing school currently partners with the University of New England in Maine, and the proposed program at Rhode Island College would keep that program even more local. On hand to answer any questions were Jane Williams, Dean of the RIC School of Nursing; Cindy Padula, Professor of Nursing; Anne Tierney, CRNA Program Director at St. Joseph Hospital Nurse Anesthetist School; and John Prescott of Fatima Hospital.

At Chair Mancuso's request, Associate Commissioner for Academic Policy and Planning Deborah Grossman-Garber provided background on the proposal process. Upon submission to the Office of Higher Education (OHE), the proposal was inspected for financial, marketing (need for this type of program), and academic (expected student outcomes) soundness. An outside consultant reviewed the program, followed by an internal team of reviewers and consultants. St. Joseph Hospital is financially stable, academically solid, and conforms to national M.S.N. expectations.

In response to Colleen Callahan's question about accreditation, Dr. Pitt informed the Board that RIC is regionally accredited and that the accrediting agency approved a similar partnership program in Radiology at RIC. The program has accreditation by CCSN for nursing and by COA (Council on Accreditation) for nurse anesthesia.

In response to Michael Grande's question about faculty qualifications, Dean Williams explained that 55% of the full-time faculty is doctorally prepared. All faculty is approved by the Council on Accreditation.

In response to Antonio Barajas' question about the length of the program, Anne Tierney explained that it will be a 30-month program composed of both academic studies and a clinical internship. The program is very competitive, especially as it is currently limited to ten students, and all students must be Registered Nurses with a bachelor's degree in Nursing.

This discussion led Chair Mancuso to provide a brief overview of **Item 2m, a planned study on nursing education**. The Executive Committee agreed to engage a consultant on the need for nursing programs in Rhode Island. The Board of Education will be asked at its meeting on Monday to approve the undertaking of that nursing education study. The three public higher education institutions have been asked to fund the cost of the study, and the Executive Committee will choose a consultant.

As no one had any questions on the proposed nursing education study, Chair Mancuso asked President Dooley to update the Board of Education on **Item 2i – New 3-2 M.S. In Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island**

President Dooley and Provost DeHayes explained that URI has had an M.S. in Oceanography program for years. This conversion to a five-year hybrid degree program, if approved by the Board, would allow students to enter the master's-level portion of the program while enrolled as undergraduates, saving them both time and cost toward earning their final master's degree in Oceanography. URI is not proposing any changes to the program's current curriculum, but rather is providing an alternative pathway for Rhode Island students to earn their desired degree in a shorter amount of time. Other hybrid programs at URI have been successful, and URI's Oceanography program has high appeal to out-of-state students and is world-renowned.

Chair Mancuso commented that such programs that make college more affordable and faster for students are exciting work for the Board of Education. She invited all those present to keep bringing such innovations forward to the Board.

Item 2j – Adoption of Revised Resolution Regarding URI's Facility Clearance and Temporary Exclusion to Classified Information

President Dooley introduced URI Facility Security Officer Sally Marinelli, who explained that since 1984, security clearance has been in place at URI in order to bid on classified contracts. Normally, all members of the board overseeing URI would need to be cleared to have access to government-level secrets. However, the Department of Defense has been willing to let the governing board create a managerial group consisting of officers at URI (including herself and

President Dooley) and the current chair of the board. Chair Mancuso has begun this security clearance process, and the rest of the board members will be spared from the process by designating clearance to a managerial group via the facility clearance resolution.

In addition, Ms. Marinelli continued, until Chair Mancuso's extensive security clearance process is completed, she will be excluded from receiving classified information. The Board of Education will be asked to approve that temporary exclusion on Monday. In the future, when Chair Mancuso's clearance is complete, the Board will be asked to approve a revised facility clearance resolution adding the chair to the managerial group for receipt of classified information.

Item 2k – University of Rhode Island Intellectual Property Policy

President Dooley introduced Vice President for Research & Economic Development Peter Alfonso and Associate Vice President for Intellectual Property Management and Commercialization Jim Petell. Dr. Petell explained that the intellectual property policy was approved by URI's Faculty Senate in order to help URI be an economic engine in the state. The new policy would enable appropriate handling so that intellectual property would be protected and licensable. The draft policy is updated to be competitive in the market and to provide more incentives for faculty. President Dooley noted that URI recognized one error on the draft policy in board members packets: references to the "Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education" instead of the "Rhode Island Board of Education." A revised, corrected policy will be distributed on Monday for board approval.

In response to Karin Forbes' question about who promulgated the policy, Dr. Alfonso explained that he and URI's Intellectual Property Committee began work on this draft policy three years ago, then brought it to the Faculty Senate for review and approval. URI's current policy has been in place since 1982, reflecting the Bayh-Dole Act passed by Congress in 1980. Updates are sorely needed, and Jim Petell worked with the faculty on this draft revised policy to cover all anticipated needs. Dr. Petell added that his goal was to identify new paths for innovation and invention and to include incentives for innovators to form companies in Rhode Island for retention purposes.

Michael Grande asked about the distribution of royalties and was informed that the "college" will be specific to the school or college where the faculty member was initially appointed. In addition, Mr. Grande asked if inventors will receive more compensation now. Dr. Petell said the original amount was about 33% and that has increased to 40% under this draft revised policy. The number of disclosures has gone up and a *Providence Business News* article on March 18th had noted that the number of patents issued has more than doubled. Finally, Mr. Grande asked how URI will police intellectual property, and Dr. Petell said URI plans to select the highest value and license to a third party.

Dr. Alfonso added that intellectual property-related costs have grown exponentially over the years. The URI Research Foundation (a new center signed into law in 2007) currently manages intellectual property costs at the University but does not have the ability to meet all costs alone. With this proposed policy, the costs will be shared among the schools and colleges that create the intellectual properties, and the deans of those schools and colleges support that cost share.

Finally, President Dooley addressed **Item 2l, demolition of a metal-sided building at URI**, noting that the prefabricated metal building had been intended as a temporary building at the time it was erected. It has outlived its usefulness, and URI would like to demolish it in order to create more parking. Under current laws, the University must seek Board approval in order to demolish this temporary structure.

Item 2n, awarding of degrees by the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island, was noted by Chair Mancuso as important work of the Board. On behalf of Commissioner Di Pasquale, who was at another meeting, President Dooley explained that the faculty at each institution takes formal votes to authorize degrees and certificates, and that, by law, final board approval is needed for the institutions to confer the degrees at their commencement ceremonies in May. All board members will be invited to those commencement exercises, and President Dooley added that URI will have a pre-commencement and a post-commencement reception this year at the President's residence.

Commissioner Gist handled the next five items, beginning with **Item 2a, Rhode Island Charter Schools**, which will seek final approval at Monday's board meeting for two charter schools that will be opening in the fall. The board authorizes public charter schools for the State of Rhode Island (the only body in Rhode Island that does this), and Dr. Gist led the Board through the responsibilities chart in their handout, noting that both schools – Achievement First and the Shelia C. Skip Nowell Leadership Academy (commonly referred to as "Skip Nowell") – are in the "readiness" process. Both have demonstrated that they are ready to open successfully, having completed an initial application, a full review process, and receiving RIDE approval. The Board of Education's approval is the final step, and the commissioner is confident both schools are ready to open.

Lawrence Purtill noted that Achievement First has more applicants than spaces and asked whether there were any guarantees in the lottery system. Commissioner Gist responded that all schools need a lottery system but those lottery details vary. RIDE's Chief of Accelerating School Performance, Andrea Castaneda, explained that Achievement First had nearly 1200 applications for approximately 170 seats; the lottery for that school privileges draws of students in poverty. Skip Nowell, on the other hand, has almost 90 students and has not yet hit its enrollment cap. Once it does, Ms. Castaneda continued, there will be a waitlist; then next year, if applications grow, the school will move to a lottery. RIDE has provided back end work ensuring that students' demography is represented in the design of the lotteries.

Mr. Purtill also noted that at Achievement First, parents sign off agreeing to be involved in their children's education, but what if they cannot meet that responsibility; who will guarantee that students stay in the process? Ms. Castaneda said that the current applications reflect very strong parent involvement. Achievement First already runs 22 schools containing approximately 7,000 students and has succeeded in parental involvement.

Mathies Santos wondered if Skip Nowell's recruitment criteria was also demographically-based, and Ms. Castaneda said that this school was different because it is a start-up. Skip Nowell is currently working to attract traditionally underserved populations with a focus on pregnant and parenting teens, so recruitment has worked with places in close contact with these students. The demographics are likely to reflect a broad range, although student enrollments appear highly concentrated in Woonsocket, Central Falls, Providence, and Pawtucket for these populations. Although not necessarily designed *only* for pregnant and parenting teens, the school's mission is designed for high-risk teens and provides resources such as childcare, so it will likely attract only those teens interested in those types of programs and resources.

Karin Forbes asked how readiness is determined for charter schools. RIDE's readiness requirements include the schools' demonstrated securing of everything from a secured facility to finances to academic plans.

Colleen Callahan noted that the former Board of Regents had received a breakdown of charter schools with a percentage of students with disabilities and wondered if those figures could be available to the Board of Education for Achievement First. She also wondered about disclosures

around special need students in the lottery. Ms. Castaneda said the Board of Education will be provided with Achievement First demographics. The lottery, she explained, is designed with a safeguard and the pull cannot be derived from IEP status. Demographics have a very small swing on IEP status.

Board members had three requests for information regarding the charter schools: numbers/percentages for charters in comparison with traditional districts; gender breakout for Skip Nowell; and a summary of comments made at public hearings. The data was requested for Monday night, when the Board of Education will formally be asked to approve these schools.

Item 2b, FY '14 state-wide budget model elements, is a new process, explained Commissioner Gist, that includes expenditures and a common budget process. School district compliance was amended, and now requires the model to be approved by the Board. RIDE worked with national organizations, formed an advisory group, met with business managers, and is now asking for Board of Education approval for the budget elements for Fiscal Year 2014. The standards elements will be consistent so that districts will not be burdened, and a more detailed budget model will be designed for Fiscal Year 2015.

Colleen Callahan asked whether these were different from what was reported in the past, and RIDE Office of Statewide Efficiencies Director Cindy Brown explained that communities will see all funding budget aspects. The budgets will be tracked and reported to school committees. In order to provide a full picture, the budget model will include more transparency than in the past.

Michael Grande asked whether all districts have the same year-end date and it was explained that both East Providence and Scituate are on a different fiscal calendar than the rest of the state. Both communities have discussed changing their fiscal calendar to match the year-end date, June 30th, of the rest of the state's communities, but that would require much work for both towns to convert their books, particularly in regard to property taxes.

Mr. Grande also asked if RIDE staff will be available to follow up on things not submitted and review documents; would there be a penalty for not submitting? Commissioner Gist said the General Assembly gave RIDE responsibility to be more involved, but they do not have adequate staff to fully cover the district's budgets. Ms. Brown said that, having invested four years into the project, RIDE is seeing great results. This process was built from the ground up, but districts have embraced it and report quarterly, and quality assurance is also done. As for penalties, aid would be withheld if a district does not comply with the budget process, but that has yet to be an issue with any district.

In response to the short-handed staffing issue, Mr. Grande wondered if URI might be able to work with RIDE to provide accounting interns to help with the budget process. President Dooley agreed that was a conversation worth having for experiential learning purposes.

Commissioner Gist introduced **Item 2c, Cranston Area Career and Technical Center Transfer Agreement**. Rhode Island has ten regional centers, and those in Woonsocket, Warwick and Cranston are state-owned but locally operated. If funds are available in the capital budget, RIDE has been asked to appoint draft resolutions and transfer agreements so the properties are locally owned as well as locally operated. This agreement would achieve that.

As there were no questions, Commissioner Gist moved on to **Item 2d, Early Childhood Education Program Regulations**, noting that a community-based program was originally licensed through the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), but in 2008 the Board of Regents updated and revised the standards. She stressed that these are *voluntary* standards demonstrating that high-quality programs are being provided. The standards are built on DCYF regulations and requirements and on community-based requirements. These standards, Dr. Gist

continued, align with national benchmarks and meet or exceed National Association for the Education of Young Children standards under Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. Several partners such as Bright Stars and DCYF partnered on these standards to ensure quality and to help make the process more streamlined. Most of the 2013 changes are strictly organizational. The enclosures include descriptions, and Michelle Palermo was available for questions.

Chair Mancuso wondered when all-day kindergarten would be offered, and Commissioner Gist said the General Assembly approved an incentive bill last year. She and RIDE will continue working with the Board of Education to expand kindergarten.

President Dooley referred to an objective study, "The competition that really matters," which compared U.S. spending in education to education spending in China and India. The study found that both countries, especially China, invest hugely in early childhood education, and Dr. Dooley offered to share the link to the study if anyone was interested. Chair Mancuso added that PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) has similar information, and Commissioner Gist agreed that PARCC's collaboration among 20 states and internal assessment of common standards has produced some good information. The Program for International Studies Assessment (PISA) also provides good professional development experience for recent teachers.

Jo Eva Gaines commented on one change, removing the first floor classroom requirement, noting that in her prior experience young children's classrooms were only allowed in the first floor. Ms. Palermo responded that the early childhood program regulations align with DCYF regulations. Commissioner Gist added that the allowance is consistent with existing fire codes.

Commissioner Gist introduced **Item 2e, Recommendation of Members to the Board of Trustees of State-Operated Schools**, by noting that the Board of Education approved some board of trustee members at their last meeting on March 11th, and new names will be brought forward on Monday. Board member vacancies are being filled for the School for the Deaf, for Davies Career-Tech High School, and for the Central Falls School District after a state-wide search for those committed to education. She noted that two recommendations for members of the Davies Career-Tech High School and one recommendation for the Central Falls district (which by regulation had to be a parent) will be brought forward on Monday. However, there are still three vacancies for the School for the Deaf, each requiring that the board member be deaf or hard of hearing. Mathies Santos noted a concern raised at the March board meeting that the Board of Education is receiving only distilled information on candidates. If board members are interested, RIDE would be happy to provide names of other candidates or other information. Colleen Callahan agreed with Lt. Col. Santos regarding receiving information on who applied for the positions and the criteria for each. Dr. Callahan noted that she had been contacted by an applicant who did not hear back from RIDE regarding an application to a board. Commissioner Gist explained that the process is not formally scored but is a combination of RIDE staff, board leaders and school administrators working together to choose candidates while keeping the Governor's office informed. Chair Mancuso suggested not holding a public discussion of all candidates, given that they are people who are volunteering their time (as opposed to being hired for a paid position) so this is not a personnel issue. Board Members Callahan and Santos agreed their names and information should not be discussed publicly.

Commissioner Gist added that due to the difficulty in filling vacancies on the board for the School for the Deaf, a statutory change is being suggested to amend the requirement that board members be deaf or hard of hearing. For example, a board member could be a parent of a deaf or hard of hearing student or could be an advocate for the deaf.

Colleen Callahan wondered if reappointments of board members are on the radar. Commissioner Gist noted that we are in a good place. Once the vacancies are filled at School for the Deaf, attention can then be turned to reappointments, terms of service, etc.

Out of curiosity, Michael Bernstein asked about RIDE's experience with the applications, and Commissioner Gist said that historically, board member applications were not managed by RIDE in this way; schools would ask for permission to appoint a specific person and would receive permission. However, the process has been cleaned up and by-laws have been written, and now RIDE is working with school boards on their own by-laws. Recruitment has been done, sixty applications were received, and RIDE is now bringing forward three appointments on Monday for board approval with just three vacancies left in the education system.

3. NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday, May 8th, 4 p.m. (work session) at the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Shepard Building, Room 501, Providence, RI.

Thursday, May 23rd, 5:30 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island, Ryan Center, Kingston, RI.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Before asking for a motion to adjourn, Chair Mancuso reminded board members that a training would be held on Saturday for use of ipads, and that in the future, board members would receive electronic versions of all documents, with the only hard copies of documents being the packets for work sessions and board meetings.

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED:	That	the work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.
	Vote:	9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:
	YEAS:	Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.
	NAYS:	0

The work session adjourned at 10:35 a.m.