



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
JUNE 6, 2013**

**Enclosure 2b
July 15, 2013**

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The fourth meeting of the Rhode Island Board of Education was held on Thursday, June 6th, 2013, at the Community College of Rhode Island, 400 East Avenue, Board Room 4090, Warwick, RI 02886. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

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

Absent: None

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of June 6, 2013 as presented.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

2. OPEN FORUM

Chair Mancuso noted that speakers are welcome to address the Board on any issues, but are asked to be cognizant of the time. The Board's by-laws limit Open Forum to 20 minutes, but Chair Mancuso extended that to 30 minutes for this meeting to allow for as many speakers as possible. Members of the Board were asked to give their full attention to speakers but to not engage speakers in conversation or answer any questions from the speakers.

1. Bob Nangle, business owner, asked the Board to support the renewal of Commissioner Gist's contract, stating that kids need to graduate with true skills rather than a false set of accomplishment. Rhode Islanders must embrace change and collaborate to make it work.
2. Betsy Shimberg, former member of the Board of Regents, also supported the contract renewal, stating that change is not easy or quick but applauding Commissioner Gist for bringing both funds and new ways of thinking to Rhode Island.

3. Joan Garceau spoke in support of Commissioner Gist's contract renewal, stating that change is not easy but is necessary for Rhode Island's children.
4. Jessica Waters, 2013 Teacher of the Year, asked the Board to support Commissioner Gist's three-year contract renewal, stating that Dr. Gist listens and responds.
5. Tammi Johnson, a mother of three public school students in Central Falls, also spoke in support of the contract renewal, stating that Commissioner Gist is getting Rhode Island on the right track, which takes time, and thanking her for the teacher evaluations.
6. Lori Barden, parent of a third-grader in Pawtucket, supports the contract renewal as well, noting that improved schools and opportunities that can be provided to children should be the forefront of any initiative.
7. Kathy Torregrossa, a first grade teacher in Cranston, stated that a commissioner should lead with the 21st century skills today's students need and both compromise and collaborate in order to successfully reform education.
8. Steve Smith, president of the Providence Teachers Union, stated that Rhode Island needs the best person to inspire, ignite, and drive teachers and principals. Mr. Smith stated that kids are assessed 75 days and need support and change.
9. Jane Sessums, president of the Central Falls Teachers Union, stated that Commissioner Gist had ordered 116 layoffs and 0 displacements at a January meeting, failing to honor a contract that the Board of Regents had honored last September.
10. Frank Flynn, president of the RI Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, asked the Board not to renew Commissioner Gist's contract, stating that teachers feel ignored, policies need resources and support, and education is not a race.
11. Val Lawson, president of the East Providence Education Association and VP-elect of NEARI, also asked the Board not to renew the commissioner's contract, as RI needs a commissioner who collaborates and does not overly rely on standardized tests.
12. Ed Benson of Progressive Democrats felt that Commissioner Gist has not delivered what was promised in terms of enrollment and success and asked that Dr. Gist be held to the same standards as students.
13. Carol Marshall of the Coalition to Defend Public Education also spoke out against Commissioner Gist. Ms. Marshall felt that scores and dropout rates have not improved, gaps have increased for students with IEPs, and Race to the Top funds have been spent on test systems and data rather than classrooms.
14. Dannie Ritchie, a pediatrician and public health advocate, stated that Commissioner Gist's policies are not solving problems but rather penalizing kids. Dr. Ritchie attended a seminar the prior day that reported that black children are six times more likely to be suspended than white students and Hispanics twice as much. Low high school graduation rates and high suspensions, she said, are a health risk.
15. Rene Fontaine handed out a chart stating that NECAP scores only improved 2 points per year; next year, she said, 3800 students will be at risk of not graduating. She asked that NECAP be postponed as a graduation requirement until studied and said Dr. Gist's plan to transform education is excellent except for that one arbitrary goal.

16. Dan Wall, a Providence teacher and Cranston parent, opposed the renewal of Dr. Gist's contract because he felt education is being threatened with privatization and standardized tests. Teachers believe in collaboration, Mr. Wall said, but Dr. Gist does not, and he feels that kids are stressed and rash decisions have an ill effect on them.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education enter into Executive Session to discuss the contract renewal evaluation of Commissioner Deborah Gist pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1).

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

Chair Mancuso stated that Commissioner Gist has been notified of her right to have a discussion on Item 3 held in Open Session and she has not objected to the discussion being held in Executive Session. Any action related to this item will be taken when the Board reconvenes in Open Session.

Chair Mancuso asked all but members of the Board of Education to clear the room and also requested that audience members not linger right outside the door, as the Board is discussing a personnel matter.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:27 p.m. and at 7:29 p.m. invited Commissioner Deborah Gist to join them.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:35 p.m.

4. REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

After reviewing more than 600 letters, phone calls, emails, and meeting transcripts, Chair Mancuso had noted some common themes.

Many teachers, parents, superintendents, principals, local school committees and state leaders want to work together to improve education for all of our students. Partners in the business and community outreach at the local level want to serve as part of the process and as leaders in their own schools and communities. Those in the trenches every day want to let this board know that it is not for lack of trying or of recognition that changes need to be made to raise educational performance for our students. Perseverance without a basis in reality helps no one, Chair Mancuso stated. Factions for or against have developed.

In the spirit of cooperation, Chair Mancuso continued, we as an education board recognize that when our teachers have to shout from the mountain top to feel their message needs to be heard, then there is a communication problem. We do not have the time or energy

to rehash the past. No one person or system is perfect. No one individual has the magic key to all of the issues facing our state.

But we do ALL have a purpose, she said. The commissioner works for the Board and the Board works for the citizens of Rhode Island. We will lead the restart with the board's strategic plan as our roadmap AND with the experience of the last six months. This mission is too important to make it about us v. them, state v. local.

As chair of this board, Ms. Mancuso stated, I commit to facilitate this healing and rebuilding time. The Executive Committee will lead the future.

She then stated the proposed terms of Commissioner Gist's two-year contract as follows:

- \$190,000 base salary
- 2% raise (\$3,800) from the initial salary in 2009
- Additional 2% raise for 2nd year (\$193,800 + 2%, or \$14,147.40) for a total of \$207,947.40
- Small car allowance to \$225.00 and indoor parking.
- 15 professional days yearly with no carryover or payout if unused.
- Technology allowance of \$2500.00 (a one-time benefit).
- Quarterly performance assessments every three months as set forth in the outline by the commissioner. Three areas that are critical:
 - Effective external representation of the Board with education partners AND governmental entities after express authority of the Board and respective roles between state and local education authorities. In particular, honoring local autonomy in implementing Board of Education regulations and policies.
 - Demonstrate improved effectiveness in recognizing the rights and autonomy of school districts.
 - Respectful and meaningful collaboration with all education partners.

Lawrence Purtill stated that he does not support the renewal of Commissioner Gist's contract as outlined by Chair Mancuso because 85% of teachers do not support the renewal. He stated that morale is down, and teachers have cited a lack of collaboration and communication, which poses a serious challenge. Mr. Purtill feels that three-month contract extension is suitable and opposes the two-year contract because Commissioner Gist has not shown him effective changes. He asked Dr. Gist to listen and reach out to teachers because if they are not supported, the reforms and policies will not work.

Colleen Callahan credited Commissioner Gist for shaking things up but was concerned that Dr. Gist's managerial style will interfere with reaching goals. Dr. Callahan also stated that it is a myth that all union members oppose Commissioner Gist and all business leaders support her. Dr. Callahan stated that she is proud of being a teacher and a change agent, and she stated that experience with Dr. Gist and her interactions with teachers have driven her perspective. Teachers work hard and they want accountability, she stated, and the polls are troubling. A common thread is that Dr. Gist's managerial style has to change she noted that Chair Mancuso's list acknowledged those concerns. Dr. Callahan stated that in order to reach high standards we must be meaningfully engaged and attuned. She does not support the renewal of Commissioner Gist's contract, but she will work no matter what the vote is to make Rhode Island's education the best.

William Maaia stated that scrutiny of the commissioner has been exhaustive and teacher input in this process has been vital. Mr. Maaia is holding the Board and Commissioner Gist to high standards just as students are being held to high standards.

Mathies Santos said he is also voting no to Commissioner Gist's contract renewal as

outlined by the Chair and said he had suggested an 18-month renewal instead with a deferred raise. Lt. Col. Santos stated that the Board looks forward to working with each other and with RIDE to move the state's educational agenda forward.

The board took a roll call vote on the terms of Commissioner Gist's contract with the conditions outlined above. Jo Eva Gaines recused herself from this vote.

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Michael Grande, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education renews the contract of Commissioner Deborah Gist for two years according to the terms and conditions outlined by the Board.

Antonio Barajas: Yes
Michael Bernstein: Yes
Colleen Callahan: No
Karin Forbes: Yes
Michael Grande: Yes
Patrick Guida: Yes
William Maaia: Yes
Lawrence Purtill: No
Mathies Santos: No
Eva-Marie Mancuso: Yes

With 7 positive and 3 negative votes, the motion carried.

Commissioner Gist thanked the Board of Education for its confidence in her and said she and the education system have taken on a lot in four years and she knows the need to take on the work together. She has read statements and transcripts and has received the message from teachers and parents. Although not everyone agrees on the carry-out of policies, Commissioner Gist stated, she agrees teachers should be respected. She wants the best education system for children and looks forward to working with everyone in this room.

5a. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 8, 2013 WORK SESSION

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Antonio Barajas, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the work session of May 8, 2013.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

5b. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 23, 2013 MEETING

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the meeting of May 23, 2013.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

6. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Mancuso welcomed CCRI Assistant Professor of Art Mark Hartshorn to unveil the new logo of the Rhode Island Board of Education as chosen by members of the Board. Professor Hartshorn acknowledged those who had been involved in the logo's design. The prize for the winners is lunch with Governor Chafee and Chair Mancuso.

7. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

No reports.

8. APPROVAL ITEMS

Item 8a – Approval of the Regulations for the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards

Commissioner Gist said these standards meet or exceed nationally recognized criteria and meet all benchmarks from birth to age 5. They reflect the latest research and align with common core standards in mathematics. She thanked Michelle Palermo for her leadership on these standards. There were no questions from the board.

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Patrick Guida, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education adopts the Regulations for the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards as presented.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

Item 8b – Approval of Nomination of the Chair of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees

Commissioner Gist explained that Travis Zellner, chair of the School for the Deaf, recently resigned. At its May 7th meeting, the board of directors unanimously recommended that Dr. Marie Lynch, the board's current vice chair, be appointed chair. Dr. Lynch has served on the School for the Deaf's board for three years and has displayed excellent leadership, strength and commitment.

On a motion duly made by Antonio Barajas and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education as per R.I.G.L. § 16-26-3.1 (3) approves the recommendation of the appointment of Dr. Marie Lynch as the new Chair of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

Item 8c – Motion to grant charter – The Village Green Virtual Charter School

Commissioner Gist said this is a final approval for a charter school that will open in the fall. The school already received a first round of approval from the Board of Education, has been the subject of hearings, and has met all readiness requirements.

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Education moves to issue final approval on the Village Green Virtual Charter School charter application and award it a charter authorizing its operation for a five-year term beginning in the 2013-2014 school year and ending in the 2017-2018 school year.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

Item 8d – Authorization for Ray M. Di Pasquale to Act as Interim Commissioner of Higher Education

Chair Mancuso noted that CCRI President Ray Di Pasquale's contract as commissioner ends June 30th. Until the Board can find and appoint a new commissioner, President Di Pasquale has agreed to remain as interim commissioner for signatory purposes until September 30th or until a new commissioner is hired, whichever comes first.

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Michael Bernstein, it was

- VOTED:** That the Board of Education authorizes Ray Di Pasquale to continue, in an acting capacity, to perform the duties of the Commissioner of Higher Education which are set forth in R.I.G.L §16-59-6 and in other applicable state laws, rules and regulations, and Board by-laws, policies, and regulations, until the Board appoints a new Commissioner of Higher Education, but no later than September 30, 2013.
- Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.
- NAYS: 0

Item 8e - Approval of the Awarding of Tenure at the University of Rhode Island

President David Dooley reported that all faculty named in a prior correspondence to the Board had undergone an extensive and thorough tenure review process. All are distinguished scholars and he supports the motion to grant them tenure.

On a motion duly made by Antonio Barajas and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

- VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the awarding of tenure to those faculty members who have met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island.
- Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.
- NAYS: 0

Item 8f – Approval of the Awarding of Tenure at Rhode Island College

President Nancy Carriuolo said that, like the professors at URI, those at RIC have undergone intense scrutiny on their qualifications for tenure. She recommended that the Board approve tenure for those candidates listed in a prior communication.

Michael Grande recused himself from this vote.

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That, the Board of Education approves the awarding of tenure to those faculty members who have met the requirements for tenure at Rhode Island College.

Vote: 10 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

Item 8g – Approval of a Request for Exemption from the University of Rhode Island’s Conflict of Interest Management Committee regarding James O. Prochaska, Ph.D., and Colleen Redding, Ph.D., in accordance with the terms of the Rhode Island Public Private Partnership Act.

President Dooley explained that part of the work grants contracted to URI faculty members permit an exemption from URI’s Conflict of Interest Management Committee under certain requirements that had been explained by Attorney Louis Saccoccio at the Board’s work session. The Conflict of Interest Management Committee has vetted and approved this request for James Prochaska and Colleen Redding per the Public Private Partnership Act and are now requesting the Board’s approval. Dr. Prochaska and Atty. Saccoccio were present if the Board had any questions; none did.

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

VOTED: That, in the matter of Parent of E. Doe v. Providence School Board, the Decision of the Commissioner is affirmed as presented.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

For the benefit of the audience, Chair Mancuso listed the issues the Board of Education plans to discuss at its August retreat:

1. Analysis of High School Graduation Requirements
2. College and Career Readiness, Retention, and Completion
3. Minority and Diversity Outreach in Hiring all Board of Education Employees
4. Educator Prep, Training, and Support

- 5. Early Childhood Investment Relating to College Completion
- 6. Readiness for Full Implementation of the Common Core Curriculum

She asked members of the Board to email her if they were interested in spearheading any of the topics.

10. PRESIDENTS' REPORTS

There were no presidents' reports.

11. NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday, July 11th, 4 p.m. work session at the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Shepard Building, Room 501, Providence, Rhode Island.

Monday, July 15th, 5:30 p.m. meeting at Rhode Island College, Student Ballroom, Providence.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education seals the minutes of the Executive Session discussion of June 6, 2013.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

On a motion duly made by William C. Maaia and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 11 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, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.