



Enclosure 2a
June 18, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
May 14, 2019

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Board Chair Cottam, who chaired the meeting in the absence of Council Chair McConaghy, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. She noted for the record that Council Chair McConaghy and Members Martinez and Purtill would not be joining the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Present: Amy Beretta, *Christopher Bove, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Jo Eva Gaines

Absent: Marta Martinez
Daniel McConaghy
Lawrence Purtill

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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 14, 2019, Meeting

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Jo Eva Gaines

NAYS: 0

Next, Chair Cottam recognized that today’s meeting is the last Council meeting for Christopher Bove, the student representative on the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. Mr. Bove was presented with a certificate from the Council and a citation from the Governor.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the April 23, 2019, 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 minutes of the April 23, 2019, Meeting

Vote: 3 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Jo Eva Gaines,

NAYS: 0

[Members Cottam, Davis and Field had to abstain from the vote as they did not attend the April 23, 2019 meeting of the Council]

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Cottam noted that no one had signed up to speak.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by giving a brief recap of her first two weeks as Rhode Island's Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. She shared that she has visited 17 schools in different parts of the state where she had the opportunity to talk to teachers about instructional practices and professional learning, to administrators about distributed leadership, and to students about their passions and interests. She also met with key stakeholder groups, business leaders, community groups, non-profits, and other agency leaders on how RIDE can evolve and improve. In addition, she hosted a parent public forum, where she listened to the concerns of parents and community members, and met with members of the RI General Assembly and testified before the Senate Finance Committee.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green shared that she was lucky enough to join Governor Raimondo and Mayor Elorza in calling for a review of the Providence School System. She voiced that there has been a lot of questions about what the review means and stressed that the intent of the review is not to put blame on teachers or administrators, but rather to give her, as an outsider coming in, an objective and clear picture of the state of affairs (classrooms, administration, district level finances, teachers, parents, etc.) in Providence. She shared that the

Review Team is made-up of many diverse individuals, including education experts, stakeholders, and representatives from the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy, who will develop a review report that will be made public. She noted that the Review Team deliberately excludes RIDE staff as the report needs to be objective.

Commissioner Infante-Green also reported that in order for RIDE to move from a compliance-driven organization to a support-driven organization, the agency has to be staffed and organized differently. To that end, she is asking the General Assembly to lift RIDE's FTE cap and the Council to give her some flexibility and authority to make organizational changes and hires, without Council approval. Advance notice of any changes will be given and the Council will have ultimate approval authority over the organizational chart.

Lastly, Commissioner Infante-Green asked Stephen Osborn, Chief of RIDE's Division of Innovation, to give an update on the progress of the Times2 STEM Academy. Mr. Osborn reported that the school has submitted a progress report to address some areas of concern that the Council raised during the renewal process back in January. He also reported that the Chair of the School's Board of Trustees resigned last night and that he is being replaced by someone who has been at the school since its inception. Mr. Osborn reminded Council members that the school's first report to the Council is due by June 30, 2019, and noted that the school and its stakeholders have been informed that if the school does not meet all of the sustainability conditions outlined on the school's charter renewal, revocation steps will be taken.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. World Language Standards – Request for Council Endorsement

Before turning the conversation over to Lisa Foehr, Chief of RIDE's Division on Teaching and Learning, Commissioner Infante-Green expressed her excitement that her first Council meeting includes the discussion of World Language Standards. She is pleased to see the Council adopt a set of standards to guide instruction and encourage more options in world languages, beginning in the earlier grades.

Ms. Foehr was joined at the table by Erin Papa and Sarah Steverman from the Board of the RI Foreign Language Association, who went over a PowerPoint presentation on Rhode Island's need for World Language Standards. They noted that Rhode Island is the only state without World Language Standards and stressed the need to have the Council endorse the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages as Rhode Island's World Language Education Standards, which align really well with the Common Core Standards.

The recommended standards went through a survey process receiving 190 responses. The majority of responses came from public school districts, with additional feedback from educators in private schools and higher education. One-hundred percent of public school district support the adoption of the standards. The World Language Standards will be equally applicable to all languages, including American Sign Language as well as classical languages, such as Latin and Greek.

Council members praised the process and expressed that in addition to the standards, all supporting materials need to be posted on RIDE's website where the public can easily access them.

b. School Construction Projects Pay-As-You-Go Offering to LEAs

Before turning the conversation over to RIDE's school construction team, Commissioner Infante-Green expressed that during her first two-weeks as Commissioner, she has had the opportunity to travel to many schools and has seen the inequities that exist in school buildings between districts. She stressed that school buildings ought to be environments where teachers and students are proud to go to everyday, and places where families feel comfortable sending their children to.

Before delving into the presentation, Christine Lopes-Metcalf, Chief Officer of RIDE's School Building Authority Office, followed-up on a concern raised by Member Callahan at the last Council meeting on RIDE's staff capacity to take on all of this additional work while meeting the required project timelines. She explained that as the Commissioner stated earlier in the meeting, RIDE's current structure is not set-up to support robust programs, such as those created by the School Building Authority. She reminded Council members that during the last legislative session there was a change in funding to the School Building Authority in that the funding for personnel shifted from RIDE to RIHEBC, as part of their structure. RIDE has been working with RIHEBC for the past several months to understand what the options are, and just today signed a Memorandum of Understanding to try and structure a roadmap for the next five years on what the work will look like, and the staff necessary, to accomplish the work. A new Project Bond Manager was recently hired to track the Pay-As-You-Go aspect of the project and RIDE has been given the greenlight to hire additional legal support.

Ms. Lopes-Metcalf went on to present on the School Construction Pay-As-You-Go offerings incentive available to LEAs. She explained that Article 5 and 9 of the Fiscal Year 2019 State budget included a \$250M statewide school construction bond to help with upfront costs to support the state share of foundational housing aid. The intent is to help reduce borrowing, is

based on a set percentage of foundational housing aid awarded, and will only be used for projects that either have not completed or projects that have not issued permanent financing through RIHEBC.

c1 - c6 - Necessity of School Construction Projects

Dr. Joe da Silva, RIDE’s School Construction Coordinator, Architectural Design Reviewer, presented on the Necessity of School Constuction projects for six LEAs (53 schools) to be reimbursed through the school housing aid program and the School Building Authority Capital Fund:

- Cranston - \$13,497,432
- Foster - \$1,000,000
- Foster Gloucester - \$4,485,000
- Providence - \$278,430,300
- Trinity for the Performing Arts - \$11,298,705
- Westerly - \$74,284,759

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Approval of School Construction Pay-As-You-Go Offerings to LEAs

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves a one-time adjustment for Pay-As-You-Go funding to be offered to projects previously approved between May 1, 2015 and January 1, 2018, that have not completed and for projects that have not issued permanent financing (bonds) through the RI Health and Educational Building Corporation in the amount of \$39,901,249

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

b. Necessity of School Construction Projects

b1. Cranston Public Schools

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Necessity of School Construction Projects for the Cranston Public Schools totaling \$13,497,432, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-7-41.1, as Presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

b2. Foster School District

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Necessity of School Construction Projects for the Foster School District totaling \$1,000,000, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

b3. Foster Gloucester Regional School District

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Necessity of School Construction Projects for the Foster Gloucester Regional School District totaling \$4,485,000, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

b4. Providence School Department

On a motion duly made by Gara Field and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Necessity of School Construction Projects for the Providence School Department totaling \$278,430,300, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

b5. Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Necessity of School Construction Projects for the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts totaling \$11,298,705, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

b6. Westerly Public Schools

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Necessity of School Construction Projects for the Westerly Public Schools totaling \$74,284,759, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

c. Approval of Appeals Committee Recommendations

c1. P. Doe v. Chariho Regional School District

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of John Doe v. RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Commissioner’s Decision is affirmed, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

c2. Newport School Committee v. RIDE

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of Newport School Committee v. RIDE, the Commissioner’s Decision is affirmed, as presented

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

7. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

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

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

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0