



Enclosure 2a
September 22, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
May 27, 2020

**Pursuant to Governor Raimondo's Executive Order 20-34,
this meeting was held remotely**

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, via the Zoom meeting platform.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the first virtual meeting of the R.I. Board of Education and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Present: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, *Margo Cook, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, *Lauren Griffiths, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Mike Mello, and Lawrence Purtill

* Ex-officio, non-voting member

Absent:

Gara Field
Jo Eva Gaines
Rachelle Green
Mike Grey (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Marianne Monte
Stephan Pryor (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Jeffery Williams

After going over some ground rules, Chair Cottam asked for a motion for acceptance of the agenda.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the virtual meeting of May 27, 2020

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Mike Mello, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the February 5, 2020, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Timothy DelGiudice and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the February 5, 2020, meeting

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, and Thomas Izzo

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 6

[Board members Beretta, Duffy, Martinez, McConaghy, Mello, and Purtill, had to abstain as they did not attend the February 5, 2020, meeting of the Board of Education]

At this time, Chair Cottam acknowledged that this evening's meeting is the last for our PK-12 education student representative, Lauren Griffiths.

Lauren, a senior at Portsmouth High School, has served as the Chair of the Rhode Island Student Advisory Council, an elected body that includes representatives from each high school in Rhode Island. As Chair, Lauren is an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, and has been a vocal and informed student representative and an avid advocate for students statewide. Lauren will be studying International and Public Affairs at Brown University in the fall.

3. OPEN FORUM

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

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. COVID-19 – State Response

Chair Cottam framed the discussion by personally and on behalf of the Board of Education, commending Governor Raimondo as well as the Health Department and other State elected officials for their leadership, and district leaders, educators, parents and students, the business community, staff and faculty, and other professionals, for their resilience and hard work during this extraordinary time. She expressed that it has been moving to see how everyone has stepped-up to prioritize the safety and needs of students, and she is confident that everyone will benefit from this unprecedented experience.

Next, Dr. James McDonald, Chief Administrative Officer, Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), gave a health update and began by highlighting some of the unknowns of the virus back in March:

- Easily spreads from person to person;
- Spreads to individuals who are symptomatic;
- Source control – wearing masks and keeping six-feet apart is really important;
- Creating a vaccine is really important; and
- Everyone needs to be doing something to help control the spread.

Dr. McDonald spoke of the State having over 14,000 cases registered, only about 218 individuals hospitalized compared to 375 a month ago, but regrettably, 655 have passed away. He indicated that getting students to social distance and wear a mask is going to be a real challenge and getting a vaccine that is effective and safe is really important.

At this time, Chair Cottam welcome Margo Cook, Chair of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees, as a new non-voting member in ex-officio capacity, to her first meeting of the Rhode Island Board of Education. Ms. Cook is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island (URI), President of Nuveen Advisory Services, and member of the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement Board of Directors.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green echoed Chair Cottam's comments in that Rhode Island has stepped-up as a national leader during this unprecedented health challenge. She attributed the success to Rhode Island banding together to ensure that students continued to have access to an education. She shared that Rhode Island has the 4th highest per capita number of COVID-19 cases in the nation, with 40% of cases being within the Latino population, but the 10th lowest total amount in federal K-12 stimulus funding. Rhode Island immediately addressed the real challenges of COVID-19 to students, educators and the community, while ensuring continuity of learning. The RI Department of Education (RIDE) will collaborate with and support school systems to plan a reopening of schools in the fall, while reimagining what is possible with K-12 education in the long-term, as schools will look different going forward.

Next, Ana Riley, Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning at RIDE, shared some highlights

from Rhode Island's launch of Distance Learning (student attendance, unified statewide calendars, professional development, ongoing community engagement), emphasizing that having enough technology and connectivity for students, a result of \$400,000 that were raised from different organizations, was vital to the success of Distance Learning. She shared that Rhode Island will provide a robust menu of summer learning opportunities for students statewide, including face-to-face and distance learning programs - advancing academic achievement, enrichment and exploration, physical fitness, supporting student transitions, supporting multilingual learners and differently abled students, and work-based learning.

Deputy Riley ended the presentation on the reopening of schools - what they will look like when they reopen and how they prepare to reopen. She stressed that Rhode Island continues to look at the data from other countries whose schools have reopened and is constantly monitoring the CDC guidance to help direct and support the districts.

Next, Dr. Meghan Hughes, President of the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), gave an update on where the college was in the spring, where it currently is, and what the fall will look like. She emphasized that prior to March 10, 81% of the faculty had never taught remotely, only 13% of the 2,400 spring courses were being delivered online, and half of the 13,000 students had ever taken an online course. With the assistance of the CCRI Foundation, 900 students who lacked the means to attend college online, were provided with computers and hotspots. She noted that despite the pandemic and despite the challenges that CCRI students face, this year the college will see the highest graduation rate that it has seen in more than 20 years, crediting the success to the hard work of the faculty and staff. She also reported on summer learning, which has seen an increase in enrollment compared to last year's numbers, professional development for faculty to teach remotely, and alternative methods that are available for placing new incoming students who are unable to take the ACCUPLACER. As far as the fall, she shared that enrollment numbers are down, but anticipates that those numbers will be at or near what they were last year. The college continues to build its plan for reopening while keeping in mind the communities that they serve, which have been hit the hardest by this virus.

At this time, Dr. Frank Sanchez, President of Rhode Island College (RIC), gave an overview of some of the lessons learned this past spring, learning opportunities that the college is going to be engaging in not only for the current students but with RIDE for high school students, as well as the current thinking for the fall. He shared that in early March, RIC made the decision that it would be teaching remotely and by the end of the month, all classes went remote. The school reached out to 3,200 students via telephone and surveys, and engaged about 2,800 students with feedback and input in terms of their last six weeks and what that experience looked and felt like. Overall, the transition to online learning went relatively smoothly for the majority of students, but noted that the biggest challenge for students was adjusting to the different platforms that faculty were using to deliver instruction. There were also challenges with technology, grading policies, clinical and internship placements, and the fact that many students had to juggle work and school as many were first responders, frontline and essential workers, and members of the National Guard, who were being called to action in many cases. Despite some of the challenges, a high percentage of students

reported that they felt good with the engagement provided by the faculty. Summer instruction will be offered predominantly online, with small opportunities for face-to-face. As far as the fall, there are many variables that are guiding how the school needs to plan for reopening, requiring a great deal of innovation, flexibility, and difficult budget decisions.

The discussion ended with Dr. Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at the University of Rhode Island (URI), sharing that although the University faced some challenges, he is proud of how everyone pulled together in amazing ways over the last few months to support each other. URI made the decision very early in March to not have students return from spring break and to move all teaching, remotely – 2,000 classes taught by 750 faculty to remote teaching and learning in about an eight day period to provide high-quality education with strong academic standards. He highlighted that unlike CCRI and RIC, URI depends heavily on recruiting both in-state and out-of-state students, with the most important six-week period of the year being March 15 – April 30, the thick of the pandemic, not only in Rhode Island, but in the prime states where the university draws students from. Normally, there would be robust programs on campus to engage perspective students and families, so in a matter of hours everything was flipped to totally virtual outreach to those students. Applications have been the most the school has ever seen (24,000), despite all the barriers and challenges to recruiting students, the university received 3,750 deposits, by May 1, the most ever received. Provost DeHayes ended by pointing out that as a research university, the faculty, staff and students stepped up in amazing ways – the engineering students converted 700 old broken CPAP and BPAP machines into ventilators that were provided throughout RI and the world, while nursing and pharmacy students, and faculty, got involved in providing healthcare throughout the state, including contact tracing, and were a real asset at the Department of Health. The pharmacy school developed their own hand sanitizer, which was then given away free of charge. The downside was that students struggled with managing five or more classes in a remote format and with isolation. Summer teaching and learning to 7,700 students got pivoted to strictly online, with a summer dropout rate hitting a record low. As far as the fall, the university just produced a draft of four scenarios – new normal, altered mixed scenario, limited mix, and a fully virtual scenario – each with multiple learning constructs within them, being reviewed by faculty throughout the summer.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Daniel McConaghy, 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: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Mike Mello, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.