



**Enclosure 2a
October 1, 2019**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
September 17, 2019**

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. He noted for the record that Council Member Beretta would not be joining the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Present: Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, *Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, **Lauren Griffiths, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

Absent: Amy Beretta

[*Arrived at 5:33 p.m.]

[**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 September 17, 2019, Meeting

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

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Davis arrived after the acceptance of the agenda]

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the August 20, 2019, Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the August 20, 2019, Meeting

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

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Jo Eva Gaines, Gara Field, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 1

[Chair McConaghy had to abstain from the vote as he did not attend the August 20, 2019 meeting of the Council]

[Member Davis arrived after the approval of the minutes]

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair McConaghy noted for the record that no one had signed-up to speak during the Open Forum.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Infante-Green began by reporting that she continues her visits to every school district in the state, where she has observed students engaging in class and teachers eagerly applying all they learned this past summer. She also shared that she handed out Golden Apple awards to two very dedicated teachers in Bristol Warren and in Cranston and praised them for going above and beyond for their students. She noted that that level of dedication is something that she plans to highlight more throughout this school year as the focus will be on building positive school culture where students and families are treated respectfully. To that end, RIDE is working on a School Culture Toolkit, which will support every school and district with assessing and improving the culture and climate of their school community, and will outline conditions necessary for creating a culture to learn.

Commissioner Infante-Green also reported that RIDE is expanding the Student Attendance Tool, which helps schools track attendance and change habits through family outreach. Initially a successful pilot with a few districts, more than 130 school across the state have signed-up this year. RIDE is also developing guidance and sample policies that will help districts develop and implement cell phone policies.

Specific to the Providence School Districts, safety concerns are being addressed by implementing a Safety Zones pilot project that will include “safe havens” where students can seek refuge if they feel unsafe on their walk to and from school.

To support teachers statewide, RIDE is identifying professional learning opportunities around student voice, educator practices for creating a culturally affirming environment, understanding and unpacking implicit bias, and having courageous conversations with colleagues. This series will be piloted in Providence.

Commissioner Infante-Green expressed that she intends to spend time in every community as the year progresses, talking about the importance of school culture and the tremendous difference it can make on student outcomes. She hopes to capture examples of strong school culture across the state and to share those examples broadly. That will also include making sure that all district leaders understand the best practices from their colleagues across the state, as everyone can do better. To that end, RIDE hosted the first meeting with superintendents and charter school leaders last week, which was the first time both sides sat together to discuss what they are going to be working on this school year.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green invited Anthony Cottone, Legal Counsel and Hearing Officer at RIDE, to join her at the table to give a brief overview of last Friday’s Show-Cause hearing, and next steps in the legal process.

Attorney Cottone explained that prior to the hearing on the proposed Decision and Order of Control and Reconstitution of the Providence Public Schools, RIDE had to address a Motion to Intervene that had been filed by the Rhode Island Center for Justice on behalf of Providence Public School Parents, Student and Student Organizations. Thus, in the morning session, testimony was heard from representatives from the Executive Director of the Providence Student Union; the Organizing Director of the Providence Youth Student Movement; The Executive Director of Youth in Action; a parent of a child attending the Martin Luther King Elementary School; a student attending Times Squared Academy who is a facilitator at a student group called ARISE, and also from Domingo Morel, a graduate of Central High School who is now an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University and the author of a book on various articles on state takeovers of public schools.

Attorney Cottone noted that other than Assistant Professor Morel, all of the Proposed Intervenor fully support the proposed takeover, and that Assistant Professor Morel testified that in his opinion, any takeover that did not officially include a prominent role for existing stakeholders, as well as needed modification to the existing governing structures, would not likely succeed.

He highlighted that in her Decision Denying the Motion to Intervene, the Commissioner stressed that although it would be inconsistent with her duties and responsibilities under the Crowley Act to allow a small subset of Providence parents, students, and certain non-profit organizations to become parties to the legal proceeding, the Order she was considering was not the Turnaround Plan and would not control the process by which the Plan will be developed; and she reiterated that the proposed Intervenors would have a seat at the table and would not be left out as the Turnaround Plan is developed.

Mr. Cottone went on to explain that the Commissioner heard testimony on the proposed Decision and Order, from the four of the parties who had been served with the Order to Show Cause – the Mayor, the Providence School Board, the Acting Superintendent and the Providence City Council. However, it does not appear that the Notice of Non-Opposition the Commissioner received from Sabina Matos, the President of the City Council, which purportedly was on behalf of the Council as a whole, was legally binding on the City Council as no vote had been taken by the Council and any such action taken in private would have been a violation of the state's Open Meetings Act. Thus, in effect, three of the four Show Cause Parties filed effective Notices of Non-Opposition and the City Council, which legally took no position, failed to show cause why the proposed Decision and Order should not be entered. A week after the September 4 deadline for submissions established in the Show Cause Order, a lawyer for three members of the City Council – Helen Anthony, who represents Ward 2 on the East Side of Providence; Katherine Kerwin, who represents Ward 12, which includes Smith Hill and downtown; and Rachel Miller, who represents Ward 13, which includes Federal Hill – wrote expressing their Objection to the proposed Decision and Order. However, in their oral testimony, the Council Members made clear that they did not oppose reconstitution, per se, but rather sought changes in the proposed Order. They referred to the Massachusetts takeover statute and requested that the proposed Decision and Order include a formal role for stakeholder groups; a plan to increase student services around social/emotional support, child welfare and workforce development; specific measures around student accountability, and specific language on changing teacher contract language.

Attorney Cottone shared that at the close of the hearing, Commissioner Infante-Green informed those presented that she would render her final Decision and Order within three weeks. He noted that any appeal from the Commissioner's final Decision and Order would have to be made to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education within thirty (30) days from its issuance, and the Council's decision would then be appealable to the Superior Court. However, if an appeal were to be filed, it would not delay implementation of the final Decision and Order as no stay of enforcement pending an appeal has been requested.

Commissioner Infante-Green added that the parties who testified early in the morning had reached out to RIDE to indicate that it was not about the work that RIDE was doing, but rather that they were very nervous that they had been failed in the past. RIDE promised to work with them and have been organizing transition teams that they can be part of.

She also expressed that it was one of the toughest days and with the exception of the one City Council member, everyone was on Board with the intervention, which is something that clearly needs to happen as many of the schools' EL proficiency rate is at 3.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report with an update on Times2 Academy. She reported that on August 9th, the Chair of the Board submitted a draft plan. A RIDE team comprised of members from the Charter Team as well as members of the Office of Students, Community, and Academic Supports and the Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, reviewed the draft plan and provided consolidated feedback, mostly in the form of guiding questions and met with the Chair to review and feedback and next steps. Outside of plan development and partnership with Times2 faculty, the Times2's Board has taken several action steps to ensure this school year started off well with key organizational and the staffing changes taking place the last two months:

- Hiring of Elementary and Middle/High School Principals;
- Hiring of a K-12 Academic Dean;
- Restructuring some positions from 12-month to 10-month positions;
- Dissolving the Times2 Institute arm of Times2 Inc.
- Ongoing meetings with PPSD leaders to ensure the school was ready to open;
- Continuing to build out the Board with new members and elections for officer roles – The Board currently consists of eight members, with faculty and parent representatives.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. School Accountability and Improvement – Update

Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Innovation, was joined at the table by Scott Gausland, RIDE's Director of Data and Technology, and Rachel Peterson, Specialist in the Office of Data, Analysis and Research, to give a refresher on the ESSA School Accountability System; introduce the Diploma Plus measure new for 2019; review Rhode Island's Star Ratings; review accountability data in the School Report Card platform; review of school improvement processes; and review fall 2019 timelines.

Mr. Gausland began by sharing that this is the second year of the school accountability system under ESSA. He explained that in 2018, RIDE switched to a rules-based star rating system, which is clear and user friendly, and a rule-based classification system that combines all indicators through norm and criterion-based rules to determine those ratings. He noted that Rhode Island's approach to accountability and school improvement was jointly developed by the Committee of Practitioners, which is made up of parents, teachers, and school and district leaders. He noted that school accountability provides RIDE the opportunity to comparably review the progress of our schools and to learn what is working and where improvements need to be made. He stressed that all schools, of all-star levels, should be continually reassessing their strategies for student learning and achievement. He went on to explain that Rhode Island's accountability system has two new measures at the high school level – Commissioner's Seal, which measures high school graduate proficiency both in ELA and mathematics, and Postsecondary Success, which measures high school graduate credential attainment – together, these are the Diploma Plus measures.

Next, Mr. Osborn went over the components of the Rhode Island Accountability System and how they are being measured:

- Academic Performance Measures – Achievement, Growth, English Language Proficiency, and Science Proficiency (will be added in 2021);
- Student Success Measures – Student Chronic Absenteeism, Teacher Chronic Absenteeism, Suspension Rate, and percentage of students who are exceeding academic expectations; and
- College and Career Readiness Measures – Graduation, Commissioner's Seal, and Postsecondary Success

Ms. Peterson went over how School Start Ratings are determined and what they mean – a five star rating means that a school has strong performance on all indicators, a four star rating means a school has generally strong performance, a three star rating means that a school has some areas of weakness, a two star rating means that a school has weaknesses at the overall school level, and a one star rating means a school has the lowest performance in terms of achievement and growth or graduation. She also shared the updated 2019 School Star Rating performance levels, which now include the Diploma Plus data point; how federal law (ESSA) requires identification of Rhode Island's lowest performing schools – 1-star schools in need of comprehensive support and improvement, as well as identification of schools with low performing student subgroups – TSI (targeted support and improvement) or ATSI (additional targeted support and improvement), or CSI (comprehensive support and improvement), if a school is identified for additional targeted support and improvement for four consecutive years.

Mr. Osborn ended the presentation by sharing the fall 2019 accountability timeline and how RIDE will continue to support low-performing schools – Teaching and Learning Hub; strategic, evidence-based school improvement funding; Community Advisory Boards (CABs); public reporting and transparency; responsive exit criteria; and school redesign.

Council Members discussed the need for RIDE to look at what resources are available to not only assist those schools whose academic achievement and growth are in the bottom five percent, but identify all the other schools that are on the cusp and could also benefit from state support.

b. Standards and Curriculum Overview

Lauren Matlach, RIDE's Director of Educator Effectiveness and Certification Services, began the presentation by reaffirming that RIDE firmly believes that access to high quality curriculum materials, strong instruction, deep student engagement, and high expectations, is really at the heart of high quality experiences for our students. She stated that when thinking about access to high quality curriculum materials, and when looking at the current landscape in Rhode Island, there is absolutely an equity issue, and although progress has been made, there is still significant work to do. She stressed that all students deserve access to high quality curriculum materials as it is the foundation on which we have strong instruction and student engagement.

Ms. Matlach went over the estimated percentages of Rhode Island students with access to high quality curriculum materials from survey data collected from districts in October 2018, and highlighted that it is much lower at the middle school level. She also went over the data collected last year for K-8 mathematics and reading curriculums and highlighted that less than one third of the districts have high quality curriculum materials, as defined by EdReports. In the summer of 2018, RIDE had a small cohort of districts and an additional 17 districts went through an adoption process this summer to adopt some new curriculum, which is estimated to impact more than 25,000 students, statewide. This will be an ongoing process and this year they will be looking at curriculum at the high school level.

Dr. Phyllis Lynch, RIDE's Director of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, shared that this past year, the Governor signed legislation that districts adopt high quality curriculum materials in English language arts and mathematics, by 2023, and in science, by 2025. RIDE is in the process of developing the criteria for selection of high quality curricula to be shared with districts, as they look towards adoption. The legislation also requires that by the end of 2019, RIDE review and affirm the current state standards in mathematics, English language arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, the arts, and develop curriculum frameworks, which the Council will be asked to endorse.

Council Members expressed that a high level curriculum is not the magic bullet and suggested doing a deeper dive to understand where things are going well and why, before starting to mandate the type of curriculum that districts need to purchase. They also expressed the need to provide the professional learning and supports that are necessary for teachers to understand the curriculum before they implement it.

Dr. Lynch acknowledged the Council's concerns and noted that RIDE will continue working with EdReports to develop process of reviewing and identifying the example curricula and with Instruction Partners to support curricula implementation, as well as putting out a RFP to identify professional learning provider for Eureka Math.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Endorsement of the Methodology for Determining Certification Shortage Areas

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Gara Field, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education endorse the proposed methodology for determining shortages areas for the purpose of the new Expert Residency - Shortage Area Certificate

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Endorsement of Certification Endorsement Areas - Multilingual Supports, Dyslexia, and Computer Science

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education endorse the following Certification Endorsement Areas: Multilingual Learners, Dyslexia, and Computer Science

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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 adjourns.

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0