



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
September 18, 2018

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the September 18, 2018, Work Session of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and noted for the record that Council Members Gaines, Field and Purtill would not be joining the meeting. He declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Present: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, and *Christopher Bove

Absent: Jo Eva Gaines, Gara Field, and Lawrence Purtill

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member – arrived at 6:10 p.m.]

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 Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the Work Session of September 18, 2018

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

Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Daniel McConaghy, and Marta Martinez

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the August 21, 2018, Council Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the August 21, 2018, Council Meeting

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

Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, and Marta Martinez

YEAS: 5

NAYS: 0

[Chair McConaghy had to recuse himself from the vote, as he did not attend the August 21, 2018, Meeting of the Council]

3. PRESENTATION OF AWARD CERTIFICATES

Award Certificates were presented to the Rhode Island finalists for the 2018 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the highest recognition that a kindergarten through 12th-grade mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States.

The five finalists were:

- Lindsay Bliven - Mathematics Educator at the Ashaway Elementary School, Chariho
- Jennifer Clark - Science educator at the Kent Heights Elementary School, East Providence
- Nicole Cram - Mathematics Educator at the Orlo Avenue School, East Providence
- Nicolle Greene - Mathematics Education at the Robertson Elementary School, Warwick
- Kerri Luchka - Science Educator at the Western Coventry Elementary School, Coventry

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began by reminding Council members that they have been invited to attend Open Houses being hosted by the six charter schools that are up for renewal this coming fall.

Council members requested that historical data be provided to them in advance of the visits so that they could ask targeted questions.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported that RIDE in collaboration with DCYF and with support of the RI Department of Health and Executive Office of Health and Human Services, was recently awarded a \$9M federal grant over 5 years for mental and behavioral health services for RI students in three pilot communities: Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Commissioner Wagner ended by reporting on the possibility of a bus strike by the First Student Providence Depot bus company. The strike would affect 9,000 Providence students and around 600 students statewide. Commissioner Wagner shared that this is a complicated dynamic between the National Teamsters Organization and the Local Chapter, which unfortunately is not unique to Rhode Island.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Fiscal Year 2019 Revised and Fiscal Year 2020 Current Service Level Budget

Commissioner Wagner gave a top-level overview of the Fiscal Year 2019 Revised and Fiscal Year 2020 Current Service Level budgets, which require Council approval prior to being submitted to the State.

- FY 2019 Revised Budget to adjust the 2019 budget for any changes that may have occurred since its submission and passage. Typically the changes are out of the agency's control and this year it includes:
 - o One FTE position to support adolescent health and academic achievement as part of a five-year \$9M grant recently awarded by the US Department of Health and Human Services (it requires no additional state funding); and
 - o RI School for the Deaf, which is a complex operation with its own unique challenges, is requesting \$231,880 in the 2019 Revised Budget to cover various operating expenses (\$.14 to fund an additional pre-school teacher and to fund a math teacher for a class currently being covered by a substitute teacher; \$.13M to fund various operation expenditures, including legal services, utilities, and building maintenance contracts; and \$.04M in budget savings have been identified, resulting in an additional \$.23M budget request).
- FY 2020 Current Service Level Budget, which is the 2019 Enacted Budget plus changes in budget items such as employee benefits, contracted operation costs, and utilities, plus any additional proposals that RIDE submits that are ultimately submitted in the Governor's version of the budget;
- RIDE as well as other state agencies are preparing their 2020 budgets with the possibility of a statewide funding gap for FY 2010;
- Due to the budget restrictions, RIDE is submitting a "bare bones" budget, requesting only critical initiatives that are necessary to continue work currently underway.
- In addition to its agency budget, RIDE also submits a budget for statewide education, which includes the 35 school districts, the charter schools, and the statewide schools (MET, School for the Deaf, and Davies).

b. Discussion with Providence - Empowerment Schools

Heather Tow-Yick, Providence's Chief of Staff, and Tom Flanagan, Chief Academic Officer, gave an update on the efforts underway on the empowerment work that the district has undertaken with two of its schools (Mt. Pleasant High School and Fogarty Elementary School), sparked by the school improvement grant process.

Ms. Tow-Yick shared that the empowerment school plans highlighted today were:

- Faculty led and faculty approved by over 70% of school-based faculty in alignment with the district's autonomy policy and strategic plan;
- Supported by the Providence Teacher's Union, which played a critical role in attaining member support to accept the plans; and
- The Empowerment School Plans and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) were first approved by school faculty and by key stakeholders, and then submitted and approved by RIDE this past June.

Council Members asked if the school administrators played a role in the development of the plans, and how it was decided that a school become an empowerment school.

Mr. Flanagan responded that although the principals at both schools took different approaches in the planning and development of the applications, principals facilitated the conversations and led the charge.

Commissioner Wagner explained that in order to receive funding through the School Improvement grant process when a school is identified as a "focus" or a "priority" school, the school, along with the district, has to pick a strategy, with empowerment being one of the choices.

c. Status of Statewide Curriculum

Prior to turning the presentation over to Deputy Snider, Commissioner Wagner noted that the power of high quality, accessible, teaching and learning resources has been so underappreciated by education reformers and so acutely felt by teachers for decades. When thinking about equity, one of the simplest and most powerful things that you can do to increase equity is to ensure that every teacher has access to a viable curriculum.

Deputy Snider gave an update on the status of the statewide curriculum conversation and the importance of high quality curriculum materials. Although not a "cure all," a high quality curriculum has been called out as one strategy that when done well, contributes to increased student learning and builds student knowledge.

Next, Deputy Snider went over the state’s goals:

- By 2019-2020, 80% of all LEAs who are about to choose new curriculum materials, will make a well-informed choice to adopt new PK-8 mathematics and ELA curriculum and will select high quality curriculum materials; with 100% of those having professional learning/ implementation plans to go along with that.
- By 2022-2023, 90% of districts will make high quality curriculum decisions.

Council Members discussed the difference between a tier 1 high quality curriculum versus a tier 2 rated curriculum, how much it would cost districts to invest in a new curriculum, the types of curriculums that districts are currently using, and whether districts currently have a dedicated person who makes decisions on curriculum choices.

d. Endorsement of the RI Professional Learning Standards

Daniel Ochs, Specialist in the Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, framed the conversation by giving a brief overview on the development of the standards.

The proposed standards are a critical component of RIDE’s commitment to helping schools and districts strengthen their professional learning systems and practices. Mr. Ochs shared that in RIDE’s most recent administration of SurveyWorks indicated that only about one-third of the educators that responded feel that professional development opportunities at their school are not valuable or relevant to the content that they teach. He explained that according to research, professional learning when it is done well can be very impactful for teacher practice and student outcomes.

The proposed standards are grounded in existing research base for professional learning and are aligned with key concepts found in best practices of professional learning standards adopted in other states. Their creation was informed by feedback from stakeholders in diverse roles in the education sector throughout the state.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

6a. Commissioner Wagner’s performance review, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(1)

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education convenes in Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. §4246-5(a)(1) for the reason set forth above.

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, and Daniel McConaghy

NAYS: 0

Chair McConaghy noted for the record that Commissioner Wagner had been notified of his right to have the discussion take place in Open Session and that he has indicated no objection to proceeding in Executive Session.

All non-Council members in the audience were excused with the exception of Ken Wagner, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Council reconvened in open session at 7:45 p.m.

Chair McConaghy reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on September 18, 2018

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

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, and Daniel McConaghy

NAYS: 0

[Member Beretta departed the meeting at 7:30 p.m.]

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

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

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

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, and Daniel McConaghy

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.