



RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Wednesday, May 31, 2017, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick.

Attendance was as follows:

Colby Anderson: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Amy Beretta: present
Maria Chavez Blanco: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Colleen Callahan: present
Vivian Caruolo: present
Barbara Cottam: present
Heather Crosby: present
Timothy DelGiudice: present
Dennis Duffy: present
Karin Forbes: present
William Foulkes: present
Jo Eva Gaines: present
Rachelle Green: present
Mike Grey: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Thomas Izzo: present
Marta Martinez: present
Daniel McConaghy: present
Stephan Pryor: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Lawrence Purtill: present
Joyce Stevos: present
Jeffery Williams: present (departed at 6:40 p.m.)

Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the quarterly meeting of the R.I. Board of Education, thanked President Hughes and the CCRI staff for hosting the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Chair Cottam introduced and welcomed Vivian Caruolo, the newest member of the Council on Postsecondary Education, who replaces Michael Bernstein. She also acknowledged and thanked Mr. Bernstein for his wisdom and guidance during his four years of service on the Board of Education and on the Council on Postsecondary Education.

Next, Chair Cottam introduced Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier as the Acting Commissioner of Postsecondary Education and welcomed her to her first meeting of the Board of Education.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of May 31, 2017.

Vote: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Vivian Caruolo, Heather Crosby, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, William Foulkes, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the February 22, 2017, Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the February 22, 2017, meeting

Vote: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Heather Crosby, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, William Foulkes, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Members Caruolo, Forbes and Williams had to recuse themselves from the vote as they did not attend the February 22, 2017, quarterly meeting of the Board of Education]

3. OPEN FORUM

Andrew Bramson, President and CEO of the College Crusade addressed the Board and shared that Governor Raimondo recently appointed Ed Pacheco from RI College as the new Board Chair of the College Crusade. He also shared that The College Crusade has been working with RIDE to have more first-generation and low-income students participate in dual enrollment courses. He proposed that these courses be offered during the summer months so that students who are unable to participate during the school year can also benefit from this opportunity.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRS

Chair of the Board of Education

Prior to deferring to the two Council Chairs for updates in their respective Councils, Chair Cottam recognized that this is the last meeting for Colby Anderson and thanked him for his service as Chair of the Student Advisory Council and as the student representative on the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

Colby Anderson, Chair of the RI Student Advisory Council, gave a brief account of the major issues that he hopes will continue to be addressed after he concludes his two-years as the student representative on the Council. He recounted that, from a student's perspective, community engagement is a necessary element that affects lasting school reform. Additionally, he stated that education reform often results in changing curriculum and methods and he emphasized that a strong foundation in core subjects for every student is an essential aspect of success in the future.

Chair Cottam also welcomed Maria Chavez Blanco, the ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council on Postsecondary Education, to her first meeting of the Board.

Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

Chair Daniel McConaghy began his report by sharing that the National Institute of Early Education Research recently recognized Rhode Island as a national leader in quality pre-kindergarten programs. He also shared that Commissioner Wagner delivered his Annual State of Education Address earlier this month, which focused on the successes of the past year, his vision for the future of education in Rhode Island, and continued efforts to create personalized pathways to increase opportunity for all students.

Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education

William Foulkes, Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education, began his report by mentioning that the first annual Rising Opportunity fundraising event will be held on June 2nd at CCRI.

Next, Chair Foulkes commended the management teams leading the three public institutions of postsecondary education and shared that the Council on Postsecondary Education recently approved President Dooley's contract for another three years.

Chair Foulkes welcomed Abigail Rider as the new Vice-President of Administration and Finance at the University of Rhode Island as well as Brenda Dann-Messier as the Acting Commissioner of Postsecondary Education. He also introduced Vivian Caruolo, a new member of the Council on Postsecondary Education.

Chair Foulkes ended his report by announcing that the Council recently approved a new Vice-President of Academic Affairs (Joshua Hamilton) and a new Vice-President of Student Success at RI College (Jason Meriwether), a new Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the Community College of Rhode Island (Rosemary Costigan), and a new Executive Director for The RI Nursing Education Center (Erin Wilbur).

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner Wagner began his report by commending Colby Anderson for his leadership and advocacy as the student representative on the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education over the last two years.

Leading up to the discussion later on the agenda around the new federal accountability system, Commissioner Wagner reported on the work that RIDE has been involved, with Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island, on the review of the institutions' teacher preparation programs. He shared that in addition to being reviewed by RIDE as part of the statewide teacher preparation review, the two institutions also elect to be accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) programs. RIDE has initiated conversations with CAEP about the best ways to align those criteria to relieve much of the burden on the institutions without compromising our standards for quality programming.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported that RIDE has reinitiated a statewide survey to get a better understanding of the culture and environment of schools in the context of family, student, and teacher perspectives. He explained that the ESSA work is not just about what the State does and the metrics that the State uses to hold the adults in the system accountable, but it is also fundamentally related to how we are serving or not serving our educators, students and families.

Commissioner Wagner ended his report by announcing the launch of six Prepare RI Ambassadors. These Ambassadors are teachers and other professionals in schools who will come to RIDE to help the agency better understand what needs to be done to better engage students. He explained that one of the areas that is being reemphasized is how to deliver school services with a particular focus on hands-on experiential, skills-based acquisition through learning opportunities that are aligned to student interests and careers.

Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Acting Commissioner Dann-Messier began her report by expressing how excited she is to be Acting Commissioner of Postsecondary Education and thanked everyone for the support that she has received over the last two months.

She stated that there is lots to do in the Office of Postsecondary Education and that she and her team have been working on developing some key priorities for the office over the next three-years. She looks forward to working particularly in partnership with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on aligning both systems to ensure that students have a seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

Acting Commissioner Dann-Messier ended her report by thanking Board Members for their service and that she looks forward to working with them to help realize the key priorities of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Board Resolution Delegating Authority over User Agency Contracts to the Managerial Group at the University of Rhode Island

Acting Commissioner Dann-Messier introduced a resolution from the University of Rhode Island, which was recently approved by the Council on Postsecondary Education and that now requires full Board approval. The resolution provides for the addition of Vice-President, Abigail Rider, and references the exclusion of both the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and the Council of Postsecondary Education from access to classified information, except for the Board Chair and the institutional officer specifically named in the resolution.

b. ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) - Update

Before turning the conversation over to Deputy Commissioner Snider, to talk about the draft State ESSA Plan, and to President Sanchez, to talk about the Teacher Preparation Program at Rhode Island College, Board Chair Cottam introduced the topic by sharing some questions that she had put together to guide the evening's conversation. She stated that through ESSA, the system is shifting from one of compliant accountability to a system of shared responsibility, and that the Board plays a critical role in that shared responsibility.

Next, Mary Ann Snider, Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning, gave a quick tour of the very comprehensive Draft ESSA plan, which replaces the current federal No Child Left Behind accountability system. She encouraged Board Members to review the Draft Plan, which is being posted for public review and comment for the entire month of June, and to provide feedback.

Board members discussed the importance of recognizing the growth differential of students and schools and the opportunity gaps that occur in order to recognize inequities within the system, as well as the importance of looking to models of change.

Deputy Snider discussed some of the supports RIDE will provide to identified schools such as a school improvement hub, increased technical assistance, the distribution of federal funds to support evidence based strategies, and increased public transparency. Deputy Snider went on to discuss supporting all students in meeting high expectations in a variety of vulnerable subgroups.

Board Members expressed concerns over the level of emphasis on excellence in the metrics used to classify schools, especially compared to neighboring Massachusetts, which has higher outcomes than Rhode Island.

Commissioner Wagner voiced that a key way in which we can learn from the success of other states, is through the consistency of high expectations, which has played a large role in the success in states like Massachusetts.

Lisa Foehr, Director of Educator Excellence and Certification, went over the support for educators and leaders that is reflected in the ESSA Plan that was generated from input by educators in the field. She went over the demographics of educators, including years of experience; the many pathways to become certified in Rhode Island; the disproportionate rate of program completers between most frequent and shortage areas; and race and ethnicity data of program completers.

c. Update on Educator Preparation Program at Rhode Island College

Frank Sánchez, President of RI College, began his presentation by sharing that over the last six-months folks at Rhode Island College have been working on identifying ways in which to position the college as a regional leader among teacher preparation programs. They have identified four broad themes that needed to be addressed:

- change in leadership;
- tap into the talent and expertise across the state;
- align the program with the national discourse around where teacher preparation is going at the national level; and
- invest in ways that can improve the program.

President Sánchez went on to give an update on some of the immediate changes that the college has recently undertaken. He announced that the current Dean, Don Halquist, would be stepping down and that the college is recrafting a new job description to launch a national search for a new Dean of the School of Education this coming fall. The college has also launched a Teacher Preparation Advisory Committee made up of talented teachers, principals, and superintendents from across the state, who will provide very practical guidance to the college in addressing and implementing the recommendations in the recent RIDE report. The college will also be launching two additional advisory committees around leadership and counselor education as well as hiring a Change Mentor to guide the college in positioning itself as a regional leader in preparing today's teachers and tomorrow's administrators. President Sanchez ended by sharing that the college has also invested in a full-time Assessment Director who will start on August 1.

7. ACTION ITEMS:

Enclosure 7a - Approval of the Board Resolution Delegating Authority over User Agency contracts at the University of Rhode Island

On a motion duly made by Timothy DelGiudice and seconded by Dennis Duffy, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the Resolution for the Delegation of Authority over User Agency contracts and the resolution for temporary exclusion for access to classified information for Abigail Rider, Vice-President for Administration and Finance.

Vote: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Vivian Caruolo, Heather Crosby, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, William Foulkes, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Williams departed at 6:40 p.m.]

8. **ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion duly made by Daniel McConaghy and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Vivian Caruolo, Heather Crosby, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, William Foulkes, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Williams departed at 6:40 p.m.]

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.