



Enclosure 2a
August 17, 2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
May 17, 2016

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at Rhode Island College, Providence.

Attendance was as follows:

Colby Anderson: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Amy Beretta: present
Michael Bernstein: present
Colleen Callahan: present
Barbara Cottam: present
Dennis Duffy: present
Karin Forbes: present
William Foulkes: **absent**
Jo Eva Gaines: **absent**
Constance Howes: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Thomas Izzo: present
Marta Martinez: present (arrived at 5:45 p.m.)
Daniel McConaghy: present
Judy Ouellette: **absent**
Lawrence Purtill: present
Kerry Rafanelli: present
John Rainone: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)
John J. Smith, Jr.: present
Joyce Stevos: present
Stephan Pryor: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Jeffery Williams: present

Chair Barbara Cottam welcomed everyone to the quarterly meeting of the R.I. Board of Education, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. She stated for the record that Bill Foulkes, Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education, would not be attending meeting and that Provost DeHayes was representing URI President Dooley who was also not in attendance as he was hosting a dinner to honor the 2016 Excellence Awards Recipients.

Chair Cottam also thanked President Carriuolo and the RIC staff for hosting the meeting.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Colleen Callahan it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of May 17, 2016.

Vote: 13 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Thomas Izzo, Daniel McConaghy, Judy Ouellette, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John J. Smith, Jr., Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

[Marta Martinez arrived at 5:45 p.m.]

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the March 2, 2016, Meeting

On a motion duly made by John J. Smith, Jr. and seconded by Michael Bernstein, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the March 2, 2016, meeting

Vote: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Thomas Izzo, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John J. Smith, Jr., and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

[Marta Martinez arrived at 5:45 p.m.]

[Joyce Stevos had to recuse herself from the vote as she did not attend the March 2, 2016, meeting of the Board of Education)

Chair Cottam announced that this evening would be the last meeting for a couple of individuals.

She thanked Rhode Island College President Carriuolo for her commitment and many years of service to R.I.'s postsecondary education community and wished her the very best in her future endeavors.

She also acknowledged that Connie Howes, who has served as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the R.I. Board of Education in her capacity as the Chair of the Governor's Workforce Board, will be retiring at the end of July. She thanked Ms. Howes for the hard work and dedication to R.I.'s families and students and wished her well on her retirement.

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Cottam reminded everyone wishing to address the Board to keep their remarks to two minutes or less. The following individuals spoke:

Sheila Resseger, a retired teacher from the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, expressed her concerns regarding computer automated test administration and scoring of the PARCC assessment. She stated that the automation of these procedures ignores the critical thinking and creativity of the students.

Carole Marshall, a retired teacher, expressed her concerns with creating different levels of diplomas, including the addition of the Commissioner's Seal. She indicated that this practice would discriminate against disadvantaged students.

[Documents provided to the Board of Education by Open Forum speakers are on file at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.]

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRS

Chair of the Board of Education

Chair Cottam began her report by sharing that last week the Council on Postsecondary Education unanimously selected Dr. Frank Sanchez as the new President of Rhode Island College. She recognized Chairman Foulkes for heading the search committee as well as Senator Izzo and several members of Rhode Island College faculty, staff, and students for playing an essential role in the effort.

She also reported that last Tuesday evening she had the honor of bringing greetings to the Annual Rhode Island Middle Level Educators at the New England League of Middle Schools banquet. At the event 62 students from 31 middle schools in R.I. were recognized not only for demonstrating leadership in the classroom and school activities, but also for providing service to classmates and their communities.

Chairwoman Cottam ended her report by thanking the members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education who accompanied her to Governor Raimondo's Summit for Early Learning. She noted her pleasure with the keynote speaker, who discussed the importance of early education, embracing cultural diversity, and the sustainability of high quality programs.

Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

Chairman McConaghy shared that this fall RIDE will be adding 12 sites to the Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program, bringing the total number of sites to 29. He expressed that as a parent he knows firsthand that it's never too early to start a child's education, and he encouraged Rhode Islanders to take advantage of these new opportunities.

He also shared that, as part of her commitment to helping R.I. students build the skills that matter for the jobs that pay, next week Governor Raimondo will visit Coventry High School to make an announcement about a partnership with Electric Boat. This partnership will make it more feasible for high-school graduates to get high-paying jobs while providing Rhode Island companies with a steady stream of skilled workers.

Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education

Chair Foulkes did not attend the meeting.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner Wagner began his report by sharing that one of the things that we are challenging our colleagues in school districts across the state to do is to dramatically expand our expectations and give access to advanced learning experiences to ALL students. This will require lots of work from everyone as it will put into question our assumptions about what students are capable of doing or not doing until we challenge them as opposed to playing it safe. He stated that we need to be mindful that schools cannot do this on their own as they can't magically provide more AP courses, more dual enrollment courses, etc., unless we come up with better options for partnerships. There are a number of partnerships in place that schools have created over the past few years, and this year RIDE launched an additional partnership called the Advanced Course

Network. This network will provide school districts with cost-effective ways to expand the kinds of courses they can offer when they can't offer all of the courses.

Board Member Williams asked whether there are some accountability factors built in to encourage school districts to create the models to give students access to advanced placement courses or if it is just suggested to them.

Commissioner Wagner responded that one of the things that RIDE has been signaling to the field is that it intends to incentivize, through accountability measures (as part of the new Every Student Succeeds Act), the kinds of things that we value in our system, including access to advanced coursework.

Board Member Izzo voiced that there has been a great deal of conversations around advanced coursework and dual and concurrent enrollment, but very little has been said about basic-skills development. He personally would like to hear a robust conversation about basic-skills development long before we get to acceleration.

Commissioner Wagner responded that he agrees that basic skills are absolutely critical as foundational skills for students before entering high school; however, what was previously referred to as basic skills are now called the standards. The standards, which for the first time are vertically aligned to provide students with readiness for whatever is next, combine basic skills with challenging expectations. The best strategy is to make sure that our teachers, parents, and students understand what our standards require and demand high-quality instruction.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported on the U.S. Department of Education's issuance of guidance regarding best practices in supporting the needs of transgender and gender-nonconforming students. He stressed the importance of the guidance in keeping all students safe and supported and the balanced options that it offers local school districts to come up with enhanced privacy protections for any student who might feel that he/she needs additional privacy measures. RIDE has been working for some time with stakeholders throughout the field in coming up with a R.I. version of that guidance, which will assist school districts in providing all students with equal access to education services, in a safe and supportive environment.

Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Commissioner Purcell began his report by announcing that Rhode Island College is going through a transition period and that Clark Greene will be the interim president until the newly appointed president arrives at the end of July.

Next, he recognized Andrew Bramson, the newly appointed President/ CEO of College Crusade, the college-readiness and scholarship program for middle-school and high-school students in low-income urban school districts across Rhode Island.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Proposed Revisions to the Bylaws of the Board of Education

Chair Cottam asked Ron Cavallaro, General Counsel, to give an overview of the Bylaws of the Board of Education.

Counsel Cavallaro shared that when the old Board of Regents and the old Board of Governors for Higher Education unified under its predecessor Board of Education, the staff of both the Office Higher Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education were asked to look at both sets of bylaws and draft a new set for the new entity. When staff got together to go through the exercise, it learned that both sets had originated from a single document from when the Board was unified prior to 1981, which facilitated the process of turning the two sets back into a single document.

Member Izzo suggested that, for the sake of transparency, he would like to move to amend the bylaws to allow for three (3) minutes of public comment versus the two (2) minutes being recommended.

Chair Cottam noted that the point of setting a time limit on the open public forum is not to limit discussion, but rather to give several different members of the public the opportunity to speak within the allotted 20-minute time limit. The practice has been that, when people go over the two (2) minutes, they are allowed to finish their thought, and there have been instances when the 20-minute limit has been prolonged to allow everyone who signed up to address the Board, to do so.

Counsel Cavallaro explained that, under the Open Meetings Act, open public forum is optional, so whatever time limit the Board decides on does not have to comply with any statutory requirement.

Member Williams inquired about follow-up procedures to address concerns raised by the public during open forum.

Chair Cottam explained that very often public input is on matters that are on the agenda and are being addressed by either the Councils or the Board of Education. If public concerns are not on the day's agenda, they are appropriately addressed at future meetings. The public also can provide written comment, which is distributed to all Board members.

Counsel Cavallaro explained that meeting agendas may be amended at the table by vote of the members present; however, only discussion, not voting items, is allowed to be added, unless the matter is an emergency.

b. Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Credit Costs to be reimbursed by the State

Commissioner Purcell began by noting that this year's credit costs are the same as the previous year and that there were approximately 1,700 students enrolled in the dual and concurrent programs, representing 91% of all high schools. Commissioner Purcell then proceeded to reference several diagrams demonstrating the dual-enrollment capacities of state colleges and universities, noting that Rhode Island College had the largest dual-enrollment program.

Senator Izzo asked if lack of funding could pose a barrier to the program and Commissioner Purcell explained that there wouldn't be a problem due to the allocated and supplemental funds increase to the program this year.

Council member Callahan applauded the recent funding growth, but was also curious as to whether there was any incentive in place for schools that are offering only one dual-enrollment course to encourage these schools to increase their offerings. Commissioner Wagner explained that they would discuss formal incentives after giving schools the appropriate amount of time to adjust to the new program.

Council member Callahan noted that, in addition to the incentives, she encourages RIDE to think about how to group districts to allow schools to learn from one another.

c. Summer Melt

Commissioner Purcell introduced the topic by addressing the problem with students being accepted into institutions of higher education but deciding not to enroll, noting that this decision could be the result of student choice or an implication due to life circumstances.

Commissioner Purcell defined Summer Melt in two ways:

1. Direct from high-school yield rate (ratio of college-admitted students to those who attend)
2. Preregistered yield rate (ratio of preregistered college students to those who attend)

Commissioner Purcell then referenced a study, which explained that the low college yield rate was due to factors such as lack of knowledge about attending college, poor advising,

personal financial concerns, and insufficient parental support. He also noted that this problem most significantly affects low-income, minority, and first-generation students.

Commissioner Purcell addressed the need for a solution to this problem, which would require the efforts of both K-12 schools and colleges.

Commissioner Purcell continued by noting that college tuition prices play a major role in a student's decision to attend a higher-learning institution, and it is a problem that the state has begun to address with Last Dollar scholarships, passive financial aid, and optimizing aid packages.

He also discussed other efforts involved in the solution such as the FASFA completion project, which identifies high-school seniors who haven't completed FASFA requirements and provides them with guidance in order to do so. The goal for this program is to expand to all school districts next year. Other programs Commissioner Purcell discussed were College Student Inventory and summer transition programs such as the College Crusade, both of which aim to address the problem under discussion.

Commissioner Purcell concluded by posing the question of whether investing in these types of programs is worth it, stressing that it is important to address the needs of the students who will stay in Rhode Island because the local workforce is instrumental in strengthening the economy.

d. Update on the Draft Revisions to the Secondary School Regulations

Commissioner Wagner stressed the importance of graduation requirements such as test scores and rigor, and he discussed the risk of setting the bar for graduation too high or too low. He then noted that the new model is a proposal for one diploma; however, the diploma can be further enhanced through student pathways.

Commissioner Wagner introduced the idea of designations, explaining that there are two kinds:

1. Assessment-based (Commissioner's Seal), and
2. Course-based

Commissioner Wagner provided two significant explanations for the model:

1. All students are different and unique in their own ways, and there should be a method to demonstrate this idea (i.e. "One size doesn't fit all")
2. Designations would provide information that could be used for an accountability system. RIDE could set goals for school districts for the percentage of students

who receive designations, which would create incentives that benefit students and move the system forward without the requirements that create barriers for receiving a diploma.

Deputy Commissioner Snider reiterated that regulations should be accessible to students and discussed the importance of personalizing the high-school experience while still attending to the needs of the students. She went on to discuss making course classifications flexible, and she continued the discussion regarding a performance-based diploma, including the ideas of the Commissioner's Seal and pathway endorsements.

Board member Bernstein asked if there were any other states with similar diploma models. Commissioner Wagner explained that there are many states struggling with choosing the right model and whether or not to make a passing score on a test a graduation requirement. There is no easy way to do this, but with the introduction of assessments like PARCC, Smarter Balanced, SATs, etc., all options should be explored.

Commissioner Wagner then explained that this new model is not about levels of recognition but about giving students the ability to show what they accomplished and what requirements they met in high school.

Board member Bernstein asked whether the diploma with different designations would be equivalent, and Commissioner Wagner explained that a diploma with any designation would satisfy federal graduation requirements. Commissioner Wagner continued by reiterating the intent of challenging the system to move forward without graduation requirements that could potentially serve as barriers.

Board member Duffy praised the proposed model, likening it to the college system that uses distinctions such as Cum, Magna Cum, and Summa Cum Laude. He then stressed that we can't be afraid to recognize achievement.

Senator Izzo inquired whether there will be assistance and dollar resources available to LEAs to implement the new model. Commissioner Wagner explained that the system would have to adjust, but school districts are accustomed, with advanced notice, to implement these types of changes.

Board member Callahan noted that she thought this model is a much-needed step forward as it articulates the seriousness of the diploma and takes the burden from the student into the system, where it should be. She also expressed that some of the resources that Senator Izzo was referring to will come into play around student support and professional development.

Board member Williams asked for clarification on the menu options of the Commissioner's Seal. Commissioner Wagner explained that the regulations are structured to create the construct of the designation and to create the Commissioner's Seal as one of those designations; however, there is more work that needs to be done to identify eligible assessments to meet that need, the level on each of those assessments, and what the course sequence should look like. The way that it is structured in the regulations is that those decisions will be adopted by the Council later on as a policy action.

Board member Williams expressed deep concerns and questioned whether a high-school diploma without designations would be perceived as holding less value in the eyes of colleges. Commissioner Wagner explained that currently colleges make assumptions about levels of academic rigor based on the Zip code of a student, so the designations aim to provide relevant information and demonstrated knowledge and skills of the students.

Chairwoman Cottam concluded the discussion and moved to the action items.

7. ACTION ITEMS

Enclosure 7a - Approval of the Proposed Revisions to the Bylaws of the Board of Education

Chair Cottam asked for a motion to approve the Bylaws of the Board of Education

Karin Forbes moved, seconded by Amy Beretta

Senator Izzo moved to amend the Bylaws to change the time allotment for Public Forum from two (2) minutes to three (3) minutes per person and it was seconded by Amy Beretta.

Chair Cottam then asked for a motion to change the time allotment for Public Comment from two (2) minutes to three (3) minutes per person on the proposed Bylaws of the Board of Education

VOTED: That, the R.I. Board of Education approves the amendment on the change of the time allotment for Public Comment from two (2) minutes to three (3) minutes per person on its proposed Bylaws.

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

Chair Cottam then asked for a motion to approve the Bylaws as amended

On a motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That, the R.I. Board of Education approves its Bylaws as amended

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

Enclosure 7b - Approval of the Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Credit Costs to be Reimbursed by the State

On a motion duly made by Michael Bernstein and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was

VOTED: That, the R.I. Board of Education approves the Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Credit Costs from the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island, to be reimbursed by the State for the Academic Year 2016-2017, as presented.

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein,
Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes,
Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy,
Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith,
Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

8. 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: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein,
Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes,
Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy,
Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, Joyce Stevos, and
Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.