



Enclosure 2a
November 16, 2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
August 17, 2016

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Wednesday, August 17, 2016, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick.

Attendance was as follows:

Colby Anderson: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Amy Beretta: present
Michael Bernstein: present
Colleen Callahan: present
Barbara Cottam: present
Heather Crosby: present
Timothy DelGiudice: **absent**
Dennis Duffy: **absent**
Karin Forbes: **absent**
William Foulkes: present
Jo Eva Gaines: present
Rachelle Green: present
Mike Grey: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Thomas Izzo: **absent**
Marta Martinez: present
Daniel McConaghy: present
Stephan Pryor: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Lawrence Purtill: **absent**
John Rainone: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Joyce Stevos: present
Jeffery Williams: **absent**

Chair Barbara 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 and for the tour of the facility that afternoon, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. She stated for the record that Board Members DelGiudice, Duffy, Izzo, and Williams had notified her that they would not be attending the meeting.

Chair Cottam also welcomed four new Board members to their first meeting of the full Board of Education: Heather Crosby, Rachelle Green, and Tim DelGiudice, who were recently appointed to the Council on Postsecondary Education, and Mike Grey, the new Chair of the Governor’s Workforce Board.

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 August 17, 2016.

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Heather Crosby, William Foulkes, Joe Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the May 17, 2016, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Daniel McConaghy and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

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

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Chair Foulkes and Members Crosby, Gaines, and Green had to recuse themselves from the vote as they did not attend the May 17, 2016, meeting of the Board of Education.]

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Cottam reported that no one had signed up to speak at Open Forum.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRS

Chair of the Board of Education

Chair Cottam began her report by welcoming Dr. Frank Sanchez, Rhode Island College's (RIC) 10th President, to his first official meeting of the Board of Education. She noted that Dr. Sanchez has hit the ground running with a listening tour and meetings with faculty, staff members, students, and alumni and foundation members. Dr. Sanchez has shared with her and Chair Foulkes that he has been impressed by the remarkable culture of RIC, one that is student-centered and promotes a strong ethic of care, as well as the impressive partnerships across industry, PK-12, and government.

President Sanchez thanked Chair Cottam for the warm welcome and reiterated that he is indeed impressed by the ethic of care when speaking with students, faculty, staff, and alumni. President Sanchez shared that there are some emerging themes, framed from some of the strengths of the college, that arise from his formal and informal conversations that he thinks will ultimately be a part of the college's strategic plan going forward.

President Sanchez noted that RIC's faculty and student interactions are second to none. As such, he wants to create a culture that is about learning innovation that includes not just experiential learning, but also more engaging project-based activities that align well with the majors that the college offers and the 21st-century degree that students will receive.

Another common theme that comes up often is focused on community partnerships. He has had the opportunity to meet with a number of people from foundations, K-12 education, non-profits, community organizations, and private industry who are willing to partner with RIC to figure out how to move forward on a number of topics through this collective-impact approach to making a difference.

Another area in which RIC is already a leader and that he would like to have a focused conversation on is on the topic of how to execute inclusive excellence at the college to ensure that tomorrow's graduates are equipped to handle many of the issues happening around the country and the globe.

The other area of focus is on institutional effectiveness and how to bring the college up to speed so that it can provide the very best, most affordable, and highest-quality degree for Rhode Islanders.

Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

Chair McConaghy began by reporting that the current draft of the Secondary School Regulations, which the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education gave preliminary approval to on May 17th, is now undergoing the formal process for receiving public comment.

Next, Chair McConaghy encouraged all Council members to attend RIDE's 5th annual Innovation Powered by Technology Conference, scheduled for September 17th.

Chair McConaghy ended his report by announcing that, on September 12th, Council Member Callahan along with two members of the RIDE leadership team will be participating in the fall convening of the Next Generation High Schools initiative at the White House. They will discuss some of the initiatives under way in Rhode Island and will return with many ideas on how to redesign and re-imagine our secondary schools.

Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education

Chair Foulkes began by reporting that it has been a busy last couple of months for the Postsecondary Council. Relative to moving forward in the fall, the Council is beginning the budgeting process for postsecondary education. Recently the Governor signed the performance-funding legislation and the funding formula for postsecondary education, which sets some hard deadlines in terms of transparency, objectives, and accountability on where resources go. He praised Commissioner Purcell and the college presidents and their staffs for their tireless, around-the-clock work, throughout a very challenging budget process. It is a great opportunity to tie together more specifically some of the objectives on the five-year strategic planning approved by the Council last December and to have long-range planning for resource allocation.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Considering that he had a number of discussion items on the agenda, in the interest of time Commissioner Wagner conceded his updates and said that he would be addressing his topics during the discussion items part of the agenda.

Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Commissioner Purcell went over a PowerPoint presentation - Higher Education: Demographics, differences, destiny, and debt - comparing national data with local data to give some context on why some of the postsecondary work is important as we look forward to this upcoming year and adapt to how we prepare our students for careers in the 21st century.

Commissioner Purcell highlighted that, according to *America's Divided Recovery: College-Haves and Have-Nots* report, nearly all of the jobs created during the recovery have gone to college-educated workers while those with a high-school diploma or less are being left behind. Also, the fastest-growing occupations by percent appear to be in the postsecondary-skilled areas while the occupations with the largest job decline are those that don't require any education. Licensing and credentialing is still very important, and the postsecondary institutions have become the vehicle for a lot of the credentialing and licensing, rather than the union route.

Commissioner Purcell also reported on student debt in Rhode Island, which, according to a new report by Lend.edu, is the second highest, between our neighboring states of Connecticut and New Hampshire, at an average of \$35,000. To address the issue he suggested:

- increasing the state investment in higher education and need-based programs, such as R.I. Promise and Prepare RI;
- minimizing tuition increases;
- helping students complete their college education by giving them credit through prior learning experiences that are not traditional, credit-for-trade credentials; and allowing students to transfer credits, making clear definitions of what pathways are so that they don't waste credits, and adopting more intrusive advising.

Chair Cottam asked Commissioner Purcell to look into why in Rhode Island we are so different from other states on the awarding of Pell grants, as it plays into some of the initiatives being discussed this evening.

Commissioner Purcell replied that he will look deeper into it, but, at first glance, data seem to indicate that in Rhode Island many low-income students tend to attend out-of-state institutions of postsecondary education, compared with some of the bigger states.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. New Skills for Youth

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic and shared that the New Skills for Youth is a grant application that Rhode Island and many other states are applying for. The grant will fund the college pathway to career readiness that will prepare students for the 21st-century jobs that are being created, regardless of what their pathway might be. It is very important to think of college and careers together. One of the most robust, versatile, and useful pathways to career-readiness happens to be college readiness; however, there are other pathways that cannot be ignored, such as direct-to-workforce pathways, other trainings that folks go into other than college, and, of course, the military.

Commissioner Wagner went on to explain the changing role and awareness of career readiness and how it factors into the current work being led. Career pathways need to be treated much more on parity with how we currently treat college preparation. We cannot continue to pretend that students who do great work on career pathways, which includes things like alternate credentialing, are not somehow affected by in the way we hold districts and schools accountable – which somehow creates a disincentive for districts and schools to prioritize those kinds of programs. We want our career pathways to have parity with our traditional college pathways so that school districts pay equal attention to both.

Commissioner Wagner then turned the conversation over to Stephen Osborn, Chair of RIDE's Division of Innovation.

Mr. Osborn gave a high-level overview of the New Skills for Youth joint effort being led by folks at RIDE, postsecondary education, the Department of Labor and Training, and the Governor's Workforce Board. Folks have been meeting regularly to figure out how to best align the work and ensure that the right plan is being created for Rhode Island moving forward.

Mr. Osborn concluded the presentation by asking Board members to help identify other colleagues and peers who have not been part of the conversations and who may be interested in joining the dialogue in transforming career readiness in Rhode Island.

b. Prepare RI – Annual Report and Advanced Course Network

Commissioner Wagner explained that there is a very robust strategy that RIDE has been working on with the folks in postsecondary education to increase access and preparation for college work. When thinking about the construct of college readiness, there isn't anything more concrete for a student to demonstrate college readiness than to be sitting in a college-credit course while still in high school. That strategy goes along with the strategy included in the Governor's budget to increase student access to college readiness assessments (PSATs and SATs) as well as paying for student access to advanced-placement testing.

Mr. Osborn gave an overview of the dual/concurrent enrollment annual report:

- In the 2015-16 school year, 3,807 students (representing nearly every public high school in the state) participated in dual or concurrent enrollment coursework.
- Overall participation more than doubled, as compared with the previous year.
- 29% of those participating were students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch Programs;
- 61% of students participating were females.

- The majority of students participating were white, something that is being addressed to ensure that all students are being provided with and are taking advantage of this opportunity.
- 395 dual and concurrent enrollment courses were accessed by students.
- Approximately one-third of the 395 courses were offered on a college campus.
 - o 99% of dual-enrollment courses are being taken at CCRI and 1% at URI.
 - o 75% of concurrent-enrollment courses are being taken through RIC, 23% through URI, and 2% through CCRI
- In dual-enrollment courses, around 49% of students received an A/A-.
- In concurrent-enrollment courses, around 47% of students received an A/A-.

Commissioner Wagner interjected and expressed that for the record he does not see 50 percent of students achieving an A or above personally as good news and that it can't possibly be that students are achieving at that level while they are still in high school. He thinks that there are problems and challenges with grade inflation in all of postsecondary education, and he worries that those scores are just an over-inflation and that there is need for caution.

Mr. Osborn ended the conversation by sharing that, going forward, RIDE will continue working with the partner institutions to increase the number of concurrent and dual enrollment courses offered, especially targeting disadvantaged communities and underserved populations.

Member Callahan expressed that it's very important that there is adequate representation and involvement from the postsecondary institutions as well and trades and labor in these initiatives.

Mr. Osborn assured Member Callahan that this has been a complete and total partnership among RIDE, the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, and each of the individual teams at the three postsecondary institutions.

Member Callahan also expressed that, much like Commissioner Wagner, she wonders about the grade inflation, but she also wonders whether or not the students who are accessing those courses are those who are doing quite well in high school anyway. One thing that she feels is critical, in addition to getting the word out on the courses, is ensuring that the expectations for success are made available to teachers, guidance counselors, and the students themselves to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunities.

Commissioner Purcell shared that, so far in Rhode Island, many of these courses are a year long, so high-school students have access to the content and the curriculum for a longer period than a traditional college student, which can very well influence the grades to some extent. As far as the selectivity, no student should be going into those programs unless the guidance counselor or principal has sanctified them as being high-achieving and college-ready.

Chair Foulkes praised the report and asked what the goals are for next year, who is in charge, who will be on the team going forward, and who will be held accountable.

Commissioner Wagner responded that there are two sides to it. RIDE has taken the lead in helping to publicize and increase the growth of the Prepare RI program, because it's about PK-12 students, but it dovetails with the Advanced Coursework Network, which is a network of a broader range of partners (school districts, private colleges, and nonprofits) to do the same thing, but from a different angle. Like Commissioner Purcell, he, too, worries about quality and fidelity, which is tied to how we know that what is being implemented truly is college material. Like his counterparts in many states, he hopes that Rhode Island will join an accrediting body while preserving the fidelity and the growth of the program.

Council Member Gaines asked if strategies are being pursued to reach the underrepresented minorities in this program.

Mr. Osborn replied that, in order to address the barriers and increase the urban numbers moving forward, the group is partnering with the College Crusade to figure out how to share information about the opportunities that are available to students and how to get information into parents' hands. The group has also visited schools in Providence and Central Falls.

c. Career and Technical Education Funding Policy and Categorical for Trust

Commissioner Wagner explained that one of the components in the Regulations Governing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Rhode Island adopted by the Board of Education in 2012 is the idea that the service providers of CTE are just service providers without protective turf and that any student can attend any CTE program in the state.

Since then, there has been much controversy surrounding the open-enrollment status as well as who approves the programs and who allocates the funding. Largely in response to feedback from the business community that RIDE was not being nimble enough in responding to the needs of the business and employer community to really make CTE the quality and responsive program that it should be, coupling both the career-readiness skills with the academic-readiness skills, in 2014 the Rhode Island Legislature created an entity called the CTE Board and CTE Trust. The CTE Board and Trust was charged with largely advising RIDE and the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education on program standards and on funding decisions, which created lots of controversy.

This past legislative session legislation was introduced to revise the 2014 statute, which now puts in the hands of RIDE working with the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, program approval and program funding, with a caveat that the CTE Board has to approve the policy that will guide the funding decisions.

Mr. Osborn went over the CTE Funding Policy document that will be presented to the CTE Board for formal adoption, which will guide how RIDE will allocate State CTE categorical funding that it receives from the General Assembly to support career and technical education in Rhode Island.

In closing, Commissioner Wagner explained that the CTE Trust is a 503C nonprofit that was established for the purpose of supporting these kinds of innovative programs to supplement the work at RIDE. Over the past two years, there has been very little actual fundraising engagement, primarily because the attention has been diverted to some of the broader governance and policy issues. One of the things that RIDE intends to do under the terms of the MOA is transfer some of the extra \$1M in categorical funds for CTE that the legislature gave RIDE over to the CTE Trust for the Trust to allocate to school districts. What that will do is bring the CTE Trust into the work as a partner with some state-funded seed money, giving them some funds to go to the broader philanthropic and business community and raise additional matching funds.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by William Foulkes and seconded by Heather Crosby, 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, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Heather Crosby, William Foulkes, Joe Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.