



Enclosure 2a
June 28, 2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
April 26, 2016

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Tuesday, April 26, 2016, at the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Daniel McConaghy, *Colby Anderson, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

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 Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of April 26, 2016

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Callahan arrived at 5:45 p.m.]

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the March 31, 2016, Work Session

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the March 31, 2016, Work Session

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Members Callahan and Martinez recused themselves from the vote as they did not attend the March 31, 2016, Work Session]

2b. Minutes of the April 5, 2016, Council Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the April 5, 2016, Council Meeting

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Callahan arrived at 5:45 p.m.]

3. OPEN FORUM

Tracy Ramos, representing Parents Across Rhode Island, spoke on the proposed draft revisions to the Secondary School Regulations. She voiced that the revisions do not speak of how schools will be rated; they do not address the mandate that beginning with the Class of 2017, LEAs can begin using standardized tests as a graduation requirement, which seems to conflict with the idea that students must be given notice by October of their freshman year; and it is also very unclear how the Council would dictate to an elected body which policies they should adopt.

Stephanie Geller, Senior Policy Analyst, R.I. Kids Count, spoke on the proposed draft revisions to the Secondary School Regulations. She thanked RIDE for providing so many opportunities for students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to provide input on the proposed draft revisions. R.I. Kids Count has been tracking R.I.'s high school graduation rates for many years, and although there has been steady progress, there are

still large gaps in rates between low-income and higher-income students. Students are also arriving at college without the necessary skills to succeed in higher education and require remedial courses in reading, writing or mathematics. She also shared her concerns that the proposed regulations allow students to substitute two required content-area courses, closing off opportunities for entrance into many colleges.

Al Lubrano, Chair of the CTE Board and Trust, shared that in collaboration with RIDE, great progress is being made in keeping with the vision to create a system of career and technical education that prepares students to meet the needs of Rhode Island employers. The CTE Board recently passed two resolutions that will ensure that the industry standards that have been established by the actual industries that are being served, are met, otherwise there will be no funding that goes to those programs. All new programs will meet standards developed and adopted by the CTE Board and Trust and approved by RIDE, and the existing programs will be phased in. With respect to the CTE Trust, RIDE will propose a funding policy to the CTE Board and Trust that will guide the distribution of all state and federal discretionary funding.

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

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Chair Cottam began her report by echoing Chair Lubrano's sentiments on the excellent work and progress being made by the CTE Board and Trust.

She also reported on the search for the new president of R.I. College. The search committee has been able to stick with a fairly aggressive timetable and will be holding second interviews, from a pool of 40 candidates, in early May.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began by reporting that RIDE recently launched the Advanced Coursework Network. This initiative builds upon Governor Raimondo's Prepare R.I. initiative for dual and concurrent enrollment work being done with the R.I. Institutions of Higher Education and dramatically expands options. There are 14 additional providers offering 120 additional courses this coming year, including private institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, non-traditional providers, and district schools as operators.

Council Member Callahan suggested and Commissioner Wagner agreed, that there would be an opportunity for a presentation on the topic at a future meeting of the Council.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported on the recent Superior Court ruling (*Giannini v. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, et al*), that reserves a decision by the Council and finds, in essence, that school districts may not charge fees for summer-school offerings. He shared his concerns with the ruling coming shy of three months prior to the end of the school year as it will have implications on school district budgets. The Council will not be contesting the policy finding of the ruling, however, it will be challenging the timing and asking for a delay in implementation to allow districts time to make budgetary adjustments.

Finally, Commissioner Wagner reported that Kimberly Bright, RIDE's Chief of Staff, is leaving at the end of June to pursue her studies at the Harvard Kennedy School Mid-Career Masters in Public Administration Program.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Organizational Chart

Commissioner Wagner introduced RIDE's new organizational chart, which was designed to reflect the priorities of the current strategic plan and provide the most optimal utility to advance schooling in R.I.

He highlighted some key changes being proposed:

- Adding a new Deputy for Teaching and Learning and promoting Mary Ann Snider from her current position as the RIDE Chief for Teaching and Learning, to the role of Deputy to lead that side of the agency;
- Renaming the current Deputy Commissioner/General Counsel, David Abbott, to lead the operations aspect of the organization;
- Renaming Stephen Osborn, the current Chief of Accelerating School Performance, to Chief for Innovation, to lead the Office of College and Career Readiness (a team merged from the Office of Multiple Pathways and the Office of Transformation and Charter Schools), the Office of Data Analysis and Research (formerly within the Division of Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness), and the Office of Network & Information Systems (formerly within the Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies);
- Reassigning the Office of Human Resources to the Office of the Commissioner, under the Chief of Staff. The Office of Human Resources will be led by the Director, formerly a manager;
- Adding a Performance Manager position to the Office of the Commissioner as an advisor to the Commissioner, to think about not just performance management but overall strategy and policy.

b. Discussion of Proposed Revisions to the Secondary School Regulations

Commissioner Wagner framed the conversation by expressing that there are certain opportunities in leadership where your job is to find a vision that inspires and challenges, and there are other opportunities in leadership where you are surrounded by so many different visions that sometimes you just try to find a solution that lots of people find mildly disappointing, but overall it feels like about the right balance of things.

The graduation requirements fall in between those two places as we absolutely want to crystalize in the graduation requirements the kinds of globally competent graduates that are in our strategic plan and we want to take this as a moment to really put student pathways (i.e. CTE pathways, traditional pathways, or a blending of the two) front and center in our work.

He shared that like many others across the country, he too has been thinking about a really thorny set of political and policy issues around testing, graduation requirements, access/barriers to a credential, and how to change in ways that don't break the system but preserve people's confidence. If the Council establishes something that is going to meet the call for absolute rigor, it will be setting-up a challenge that many will believe will never come to fruition and they will wait for the Council to blink. On the contrary, if the bar is set too low, than we are never going to challenge our students. He explained that what this proposal is designed to do is to strike that balance and be a way to challenge the field, the students and the teachers in the system, without creating something that from the get-go people will say that we are not going to follow through on. What RIDE is proposing is to take the current student-based testing requirement and shift it to be a school-based accountability metric.

Mary Ann Snider, Chief of the RIDE Teaching and Learning Division, joined the table and went over the red-lined version of the proposed revisions to the regulations and answered questions on the standard (both national and state), the proficiency being measured against, issuance of guidance to districts, completion and requirements of course work, common planning time, and professional development requirements.

Council member Beretta reiterated her concerns from the previous meeting on allowing the flexibility for students to substitute required content area courses, such as English and mathematics. Although she believes in allowing for flexibility, she stressed that the Board has an obligation to set the bar at the best possible level to ensure that upon graduating from high school, students are prepared whether they go to work or college, and that it cannot be left to the locals to always make the best decisions.

Council member Forbes echoed Council Member Beretta's concerns in that a four-year mathematics graduation requirement is crucial in order to address the need to improve proficiency in mathematics on statewide testing.

Commissioner Wagner responded by addressing the aforementioned concerns, stating that if the Council did decide that a four-year mathematics requirement was necessary, then he would recommend that the flexibility for students to substitute required content area courses be restrained in order to prevent the undermining of the other core subjects.

c. Career and Technical Education Board and Trust – Update

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic and shared the conversation that has been occurring over the past two years with the CTE revised regulations that went into effect in 2012 and the CTE statute in 2014. The intent of this discussion was to bring a recommendation about how to interpret the statute and to find the most effective method to handle CTE program approval and funding. Commissioner Wagner then took a moment to stress the need to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge on the CTE Board, which is comprised of members who are among the top in their respective fields.

The technical question regarding the topic is who would have the final say on particular decisions involving RIDE and the CTE Board and Trust. The Commissioner's recommendation was for RIDE to retain the final say on matters unless otherwise specified in statute.

There are two primary decisions that have to be made regarding the CTE statute:

- How the programs get approved: Commissioner Wagner recommended that RIDE consider the guidance and feedback provided by the CTE Board and Trust, but the final say of program approval is left to RIDE.
- CTE program funding: Commissioner Wagner recommended that RIDE consider the advice from the CTE Board and Trust but the final say is once again left to RIDE. However, the policy that guides CTE funding needs the advice and consent of the CTE Board and Trust.

Approval of the Council wasn't needed at the time, but Commissioner Wagner did say that policy would be brought before the Council for approval before being brought to the CTE Board.

Steven Osborn walked through some of the language of the CTE Board resolutions, which Commissioner Wagner noted that there was still further work that needed to be done.

d. Necessity of School Construction Projects

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic by explaining that the School Facilities Advisory Group will advise on the construction process, and that this is the first round of integrating their role in the process.

Joe da Silva, School Construction Coordinator for the School Building Authority at RIDE, shared that he is pleased that the General Assembly lifted the moratorium on school construction, which led to the creation of the School Building Authority, a School Building Authority Advisory Board, as well as a School Building Authority Capital Fund.

Mr. da Silva stated that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education has the authority to approve school construction projects, and that the Advisory Board will make recommendations about the projects. There is a new statute in place that requires prioritization of projects in that the projects have to be brought before the Council, which DaSilva addressed before giving an overview of Encl. 6d1.

Mr. da Silva noted a provision in the regulations that is not included in the shared documents, which allows Commissioner Wagner to approve projects that are less than \$500,000 and require immediacy. In this fiscal year, there were three such projects located in Central Falls, Woonsocket, and Kingston Hill Academy.

e. Review of request to install Solar Park: William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School

Joe da Silva addressed that jurisdictional approvals are still required for the installation of the Solar Park. Chairman McConaghy questioned the significance of the project and the quality of the results this project would bring, which DaSilva said he would address with detail in the following meeting.

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of Property Transfer Agreement – Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Property Transfer Agreement for the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center, as finalized by the State Properties Commission, proved the allocation of the funds are available in the approved Capital Budget, as presented.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Barbara Cottam, it was

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

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.