

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the July 23, 2019, Meeting

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 1

[Member Field had to abstain from the vote as she did not attend the July 23, 2019 meeting of the Council]

[Member Callahan arrived after the approval of the minutes)

3. OPEN FORUM

Cynthia Jones, Second Grade Teacher in Providence, expressed her concerns with the lack of adequate instructional materials necessary for teachers to be able to teach all of the specific State requirements.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by giving an update on new charter school applications. She shared that this is by far the largest pipeline of charter applications (5) that RIDE has seen in the last five years. If all five applications were to be approved, we would have gone from 23 charters (37 schools) to 27 charters (42 schools). Rhode Island's charter cap is 35. She stressed that pending the results of the quality evaluation, RIDE may also consider the priorities that were set in the RFP, which were to focus on providing high-quality education options for student in communities with schools identified as CSI ad/or for educationally disadvantaged students; specifically, economically disadvantaged, student with disabilities, and/or multi-lingual learners. She shared that RIDE did not receive any expansion requests this year, but anticipates a strong pipeline of new charter proposals and expansions in 2020, as a few potential applicants expressed their intent to delay until then.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green shared that five public charter schools are up for renewal this winter - Academy for Career Exploration; The Green School; RISE Prep Mayoral Academy; New England Laborers/CPS Construction and Career Academy; and Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and that as part of the charter renewal process, the RIDE Charter Team conducted in-depth site visits in the spring, based on the initial tier designation. The renewal reports and recommendations will be based on the site visit, charter's performance to date, and most importantly, the most recent academic result of 2019 statewide accountability/star ratings. RIDE's Charter Team is working with those schools to schedule Open Houses for Council Members to visit.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report with an update on Providence. She reiterated that it bears repeating that last year's test scores were a wakeup call for many Rhode Islanders. The RICAS and SAT results in Providence underscored what many have known to be true for years - that the current system is broken, which is reflected not only in the test scores, but in the heartbreaking stories that hundreds of Rhode Islanders shared with us this summer.

She shared that once the Council granted her authority to begin proceedings to assume control of the district, RIDE began working closely with the city and the district to move forward. She called a meeting with Aramark, who has a contract with the City of Providence to clean and maintain the schools. After that meeting, Aramark has committed to:

- Increasing all buildings to the equivalent of a higher APPA level across the district
- They are creating 2-3 dedicated project teams to work throughout the school year to respond to needs
- They are doubling their painting team by 50% year round; in addition to adding even more painters this summer
- Support engaging the community either with additional clean up days or other activities (forums, etc.)
- They also shared that a majority of their staff in buildings are Providence residents that send their children to PPSD schools and are committed to being partners moving forward

She and her team also met with Pest Control and with Gilbane, two companies that have contracts with the City of Providence to clean and maintain the schools.

Commissioner Infante Green also reported that about two weeks ago, she issued a Proposal for Decision and Order, which marks the next step in transforming Providence Public Schools. The findings of fact outlined in the order detail the district's failure to meet expectations, as well as the progressive interventions through which the state has attempted to improve outcomes. If the Mayor, City Council, School Board, or Interim Superintendent disagree with this assessment, they now have the opportunity to present evidence or testimony to the contrary at an administrative hearing on September 13, 2019.

If, at that time, the Decision and Order becomes final, she will appoint a State Turnaround Superintendent and will work with this individual, with Providence teachers, with students, and, most importantly, with families and the community at large, to develop a turnaround plan for Providence schools.

She stressed the need to take bold action in order to improve performance, support teachers, create innovative learning environments, and ultimately better serve the students and families of Providence.

Commissioner Infante Green expressed, that although she is anxious to see a plan in place and to see action, she realizes that we didn't get into this situation overnight, and that it is going to take some time and a lot of work ahead. She is excited and hopeful as ever that it can be done, that it will be done, and that this is the right path for Providence students.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report by sharing that the Times2 Academy submitted its plan on August 9th and that RIDE will give a full report to the Council at the September 17 meeting.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Nomination of Alternate Chair and Alternate Member of the Appeals Committee of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education**

Board Chair Cottam noted for the record that as established in the Bylaws of the Council, the Appeals Committee, who hears appeals from decisions of the Commissioner, is comprised of three members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and an alternate member. Today, Jo Eva Gaines is being nominated to serve as the alternate Chair of the Appeals Committee and Karen Davis as an alternate member.

- b. Recommendation of New Member to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees**

Commissioner Infante-Green noted that one of the many responsibilities of the Council is to appoint the members to the Boards of Trustees to the state-operated schools from nominations made by the Commissioner. Today she is recommending the appointment of Pamela Denton to fill a current vacancy on the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees. She shared that she had interviewed Ms. Denton and that she can attest that she possesses the leadership, strength and commitment to advance the school's goals and mission, and urged the Council to consider RIDE's recommendation.

c. Methodology for Determining Certification Shortage Areas – Request for Council Endorsement

Lisa Foehr, RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, began the presentation by reminding Council Members that as part of the Certification Regulations promulgated last December, RIDE added a certificate area called Expert Residency Shortages. During the process of approval, RIDE noted that it would need some time to identify those areas and the Council agreed that staff would come back with information prior to them endorsing the methodology used to determine those shortage areas. RIDE has been working over the last several months to look at a variety of different options for determining shortage areas and believes that they have landed on the ones that make the most sense.

Lauren Matlach, RIDE's Director of Educator Effectiveness and Certification Services, shared that last year RIDE received 404 requests for emergency certificates, with almost a third of those requests coming from the Providence School System. In terms of the Expert Residency Shortages Preliminary Methodology, RIDE would like to continue to use emergency certificates as a proxy for shortages. RIDE looked at different alternatives, but the team felt that it made sense to keep it this way to be consistent with the existing federal reporting, with some minor exceptions, such as removing areas where additional pathways already exist and where only one emergency certificate was issued. RIDE will come back to the Council in 2022 to revisit this methodology and change it, if necessary, and share data on the number and types of certificates issued, as well as well where those folks end up in assignments, if at all.

Ms. Matlach also went over the Expert Residency Shortages preliminary requirements, highlighting that much like an emergency certificate, it is requested by the school district on the applicant's behalf, with evidence that the candidate will receive at least 90 hours induction coaching. The certificate will be valid for three years and can be renewed once, for up to four years. In addition, the candidate will need to have a Bachelor's Degree with a minimum GPA of 2.75, pass content area test, and meet additional certificate requirements for specific certification areas.

Council Members expressed that there needs to be clear expectations for candidates to demonstrate progress towards full certification. They also requested information on the number and type of emergency certificates being requested and issued for the start of the upcoming school year, which RIDE agreed to provide by the next meeting.

d. Certification Endorsement Areas in Multi-lingual support, Reading/Dyslexia, and Computer Science

Ms. Foehr reminded Council Members that another provision of the new certification regulations, was that endorsements may be added to existing certificates in recognition of expanded or specialty area expertise. Ms. Foehr stressed that these endorsement plans of study are not at the same breadth and depth of a certification, and may not be used in lieu of state-required certificates for assignments. RIDE has worked through a process of engagement with stakeholders to identify three endorsement areas (Dyslexia, Multilingual Learners, and Computer Science) and to develop the competencies associated with each endorsement. All approved plans of study will need to ensure that educators demonstrate these competencies prior to receiving an endorsement.

Ms. Matlach went over the key areas of competencies and the timeline for the three endorsement areas. She highlighted that these endorsements provide opportunities for educators to study and engage in professional learning/study in a high-priority area in Rhode Island and recognize specialized expertise of educators. She reiterated what Ms. Foehr stated earlier, that these endorsements are not to be used in lieu of state-required certification.

e. School Construction Regulations - Overview of Proposed Changes

Commissioner Infante-Green introduced the topic and reminded Council Members that in the summer of 2018, the School Construction Regulations were recodified in order to meet the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act of 2016 that all state agency regulations be converted to a standardized format to ensure public access and transparency. RIDE now has to re-promulgate the regulations to comply with recent legislative and programmatic changes.

Christine Lopes Metcalfe, CEO, School Building Authority, gave a brief overview on what the Council will be expecting over the next couple of months around school construction. She began by presenting data on the number of school buildings (306), the condition assessment findings - Priority 1 & 2 facility deficiencies (warm, safe & dry) \$627.6M; Priority 3, 4 & 5 facility deficiencies \$1,595.1M.; and shared that although many school buildings are close to 100 years old, the average school building in Rhode Island, is 56 years old.

Next Ms. Metcalfe went over the areas - Legislative, Financial, and Housekeeping/Streamline - of the School Construction regulations that will be amended to align with recent legislative and programmatic changes. She also shared that in addition to updating the regulations, RIDE will be creating guidance and additional resources to address other areas related to school construction.

Council members once again raised concerns with the volume of work in the School Building Authority Office with limited amount of staff.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Approval of Recommendation to the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Gara Field, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the recommendation of Pamela Denton to the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustee, as presented.

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Approval of Appeals Committee Recommendations

b1. Student E. Doe by his Parents v Barrington School Committee

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of Student E. Doe v. Barrington School Committee, the Commissioner's decision is affirmed, as presented

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b2. Richard Bruno v. Portsmouth School Committee

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of Richard Bruno v. Portsmouth School Committee, the Commissioner's decision is affirmed, as presented

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, and Marta Martinez

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 1 - Lawrence Purtill

7. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

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

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

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

Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0