



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
September 12, 2017

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Board Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the September 12, 2017, meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and noted for the record that Council Chair McConaghy and Council Members Callahan, Gaines and Purtill would not be joining the meeting. She declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Present: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Marta Martinez, and *Thalia Philippe

Absent: Colleen Callahan, Jo Eva Gaines, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of September 12, 2017

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

Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Marta Martinez

YEAS: 5

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the August 15, 2017, Council Meeting

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Gara Field, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the August 15, 2017, Council Meeting

Vote: 4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members
voted in the negative as follows:

Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Marta Martinez

YEAS: 4

NAYS: 0

[Member Beretta had to recuse herself from the vote, as she did not attend the August 15, 2017, Meeting of the Council]

3. PRESENTATION OF AWARD CERTIFICATES

Award Certificates were presented to the Rhode Island finalists for the 2017 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the highest recognition that a kindergarten through 12th-grade mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States.

The three finalists were Kristina Sparfven, mathematics educator at the Chariho Middle School, John Labriola, science educator at the Chariho Middle School, and David Upegui, science educator at Central Falls High School.

4. OPEN FORUM

Five individuals spoke in support of the petition advanced by the American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island requesting that the Council adopt regulations relating to rights and protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students:

- Reverend Anderson – RI Council of Churches
- Marcela Betancur – Policy Associate, ACLU of RI
- Beth Capron – Adoption RI and parent of transgender son
- Alexander Hoffman – Transgender individual
- Kayla David – Clinician at Family Service of Rhode Island

Materials provided to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education by Open Forum speakers and/or submitted to be shared with Council members, are on file at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began by reflecting on the public comments provided on the topic of transgender and gender nonconforming students. He explained that RIDE has been consistent in that there is no room for hate or bigotry in Rhode Island Schools and that when the Trump administration rescinded its prior guidance; RIDE took the opportunity to ensure that these protections would remain in place. RIDE developed a model policy guidance, which 75% of districts have adopted, and it will ensure at all reporting of inappropriate treatment of students is addressed. Commissioner Wagner reported that to date, RIDE has not received any complaints of inappropriate treatment of students and cautioned against the idea of forcing a district to adopt these policies because it can sometimes be counterintuitive. Staff is reviewing the ACLU petition to determine where the authority lies in terms of the Council, RIDE, and other state protections currently in place.

Commissioner Wagner ended his report by announcing that RIDE recently released the Statewide Facilities Assessment report. He expressed that school facilities in Rhode Island are having negative effects on both teachers and students and that the report summarizes the significant needs. This has been a statewide problem, not an urban v. non-urban problem, and working towards improvement will bring the state together.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. 2017 PARCC Scores and RICAS Transition - Update

Commissioner Wagner began by reflecting on the release of the PSAT/SAT and PARCC scores. He stated that while still in transition, participation in these assessments has increased with 98% participation in elementary and middle school assessments and a 20-point increase in secondary assessments. The challenge remains that Rhode Island is not where it needs to be in terms of performance and the gap continues to widen between English Language Learners and students whose first language is English.

Next, Phyllis Lynch, Director of the Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, presented data showing the increase in overall participation on PSAT/SAT. The tests were administered at no cost to the students and were voluntary this year. Results reveal that the scores of the SAT and PSAT were very similar. The 2017 PARCC results remained relatively consistent compared to 2016 and there are still significant gaps in statewide groups such as English Language Learners, students with disabilities and low-income students. The English Language Learner gap has widened.

Director Lynch ended her presentation by reporting that Rhode Island will begin to administer the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) in spring 2018 in English Language Arts and Mathematics, in grades 3-8. There will be briefing documents for educators and families on the different assessments and information on the testing design, practice tests, released items, and the administration technology information will be posted online.

b. School Improvement Grant - Update

Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Innovation, provided an overview of RIDE's efforts to turnaround Rhode Island's lowest-performing schools and the awarding of School Improvement Grants (SIG) funding. He explained that currently there are 30 transition schools in five school districts and RIDE is awarding the SIG funds on a competitive basis to the lowest performing schools.

Next, Krystafer Redden, RIDE's Office of Career Readiness, reported that Rhode Island has revised the application and rubric for SIG in order to be more responsive to the needs of transformation schools. The newly revised models were approved by the U.S. Department of Education and then shared with the applicable education agencies. He shared that the quality of the first round of applications was not acceptable to RIDE and when asked to revise and resubmit, the applications improved across the board. Five LEAs (Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Pawtucket, and Providence) applied and two applications (Central Falls and the RI School for the Deaf) met expectations and were granted full funding, while seven were granted conditional funding. Providence only chose to apply for four of their 21 public schools.

Mr. Redden ended the SIG update by reflecting on the positive results experienced by schools funded by SIG. There are now five empowerment schools able to be incubated and there has been sustained improvement at three of the improving schools. All LEAs will share their best practices in regards to use of this funding with RIDE and moving forward, under ESSA, districts will be held accountable rather than individual schools.

c. Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Working Group Recommendations

Mr. Osborn began by explaining that during the 2013 legislative session, the General Assembly passed the Dual Enrollment Equal Opportunity Act and in 2015 created the dual enrollment fund. Dual and concurrent enrollment programs have been associated with positive outcomes such as higher GPAs, completion of college at a higher rate, helping first generation students transition to college, as well as an opportunity for students and families to save money. The program itself is predicted to grow in the upcoming school year.

Next, Mr. Osborn shared that in 2017 a Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Working Group was convened and charged with making recommendations in the areas of ensuring quality and addressing the sustainability of the Dual and Concurrent Enrollment program. The working group recommended several concepts, including the FY 2018 solution of providing block grants to the public institutions of postsecondary education based on program costs and enrollment growth. For FY 2019, there were conversations about incorporating dual enrollment into the higher education funding formula, limiting full-time dual enrollment to CCRI, and requiring a portion of funding to follow full-time dual enrolled students to CCRI. Beyond FY 2019, there is a recommendation to provide summer course options as well.

d. Recommendation of New Members to the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees

Commissioner Wagner introduced his recommendation of two new members to fill two current vacancies on the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees. One vacancy is due to the retirement of a member and the other an open vacancy. Commissioner Wagner shared that he interviewed the two finalists, Michele Cinquegrano, who currently works as Verizon Regional Director, and David Patten, Vice-President for Business Affairs at CCRI and Chair of the Westerly School Committee, and feels that they are both solid recommendations.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7a. Approval of new members to the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves Michele Cinquegrano and David Patten as new members to the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

7b. Approval of Technical Revision to the motion of enclosure 6d (Central Falls Roof Capital Project) on the August 15, 2017, meeting agenda

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the reallocation of unused FY 2016 School Building Authority Capital Funds in the amount of \$475,000 for the Central Falls roof project, and

Further approves an amendment to the minutes of the August 15, 2017, meeting to reflect revised recommendation

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

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

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.