



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
December 19, 2017

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, in the PAFF Auditorium, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island. At 5:32 p.m., Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone and noted for the record that Board Chair Cottam and Council Member Field would not be attending the meeting.

Present: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

Absent: Barbara Cottam, Gara Field and *Thalia Philippe

[*Student Representative - Ex-officio, non-voting member]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of December 19, 2017

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

Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the December 5, 2017, Council Meeting

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the December 5, 2017, Council Meeting

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

Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 7

NAYS: 0

3. OPEN FORUM

A Central Falls High School teacher cited the many challenges his school is facing and how the charter schools have only aided in constructing a system where the neediest students are not being served.

Central Falls Superintendent spoke in support of Commissioner Wagner's recommendation on Segue's revised expansion proposal.

Four individuals representing the Segue Institute for Learning spoke in favor of Commissioner Wagner's recommendation to the Council to conditionally approve the school's charter amendment for expansion in alignment with the school's revised expansion proposal.

The Executive Director of the League of Charter Schools praised Commissioner Wagner and RIDE staff for working with Segue on the revised proposal. He also acknowledged the leadership of the Central Falls School District for their continued collaboration with charter schools.

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.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner gave a brief update on the RI Schoolhouses Report, a comprehensive school facilities assessment that will assist stakeholders in making decisions to achieve the goal of adequately funding facility improvements across Rhode Island. He shared that he and the State Treasurer were appointed by the Governor to co-chair a taskforce charged with developing a report by December 15, 2017, with recommendations of specific actions to address Rhode Island's school facilities deficiencies. The report recommends that the State invest around half a billion dollars over the next ten years to focus on bringing all schools up to a warm, safe and dry standing, while investing in critical programmatic improvements around early learning, career education and STEM education.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Computer Science for Rhode Island (CS4RI)

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic and shared that this month marks another milestone for education as Governor Raimondo has called for a focus on issues of equity and access to computer science opportunities for every student. The goal is to have all RI schools, by the end of the 2017 calendar year, offer students some type of hands-on experiences around how to use logic to create new solutions, to long-standing challenges.

Next, Stephen Osborn, Chief of RIDE's Division of Innovation, gave a brief overview of the goals and key benchmarks over the last 18 months and next steps going forward:

- Phase One Goal, which began in March 2016, is wrapping up and focused on ensuring that every public school in Rhode Island taught computer science by December 2017 by building educator capacity; developing rigorous and sustainable K-12 pathways; and accelerating demand on momentum for Computer Science education.
- Phase Two Goal is to double the number of Computer Science degree graduates by 2025, and starting in January, RIDE will be collaborating with the University of Rhode Island in meeting both secondary and postsecondary goals. RIDE and the RI STEAM Center will be bringing the Computer Science Standards to the Council for review and approval in early 2018.

5b - Follow-up Discussion on Segue Institute for Learning

Commissioner Wagner gave some context to the amended recommendation that the Council will be asked to approve later on the agenda. He explained that Segue's original proposal, which was discussed at the December 5 meeting of the Council, encompassed a request for additional students as well as added grade levels, specifically K-5, as opposed to the school's current 6-8 grade configuration. Since that meeting, Segue submitted a modified proposal, which eliminates the request for new students as well as a modification to the grade configuration from the original K-5 request to grades 3-5.

Next, Commissioner Wagner answered questions from Council Members on:

- whether there is any programmatic impact to the Central Falls School District as a result of the added grades 3-5;

- what occurred since the last meeting when Commissioner Wagner stated that the school did not have clear and compelling evidence of a track-record of academic performance; and
- why the Council is being asked to conditionally approve the request, while requesting that additional materials be provided by February.

Commissioner Wagner explained that although a comment was made this evening that the Central Falls School District was opposed to the original proposal; nothing was ever officially submitted to RIDE. Earlier today, the district submitted a statement indicating that the revised proposal would be a neutral impact on the district and that it was well within the autonomy of the charter to reconfigure its grade levels.

As far as the standard that Commissioner Wagner referred to at the last meeting, that standard is held for expansions. Since the revised proposal is no longer a request for expansion, but rather a grade reconfiguration, which he believes technically, he has the authority to approve, there is no contradiction. If the school later on requests to increase the number of students, that standard will apply.

Commissioner Wagner clarified that the reason RIDE isn't recommending a preliminary approval is because preliminary approvals only apply to new charters. This is a recommendation for final approval that RIDE feels very comfortable in making and is confident that those conditions are within the realm of being met.

ACTION ITEMS

a. Existing Charters: Recommendations on Amendments to Expand

6a1 - Segue Institute for Learning

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to conditionally approve the Segue Institute for Learning Charter Amendment for Expansion in alignment with the Segue Institute for Learning’s revised expansion proposal.

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 2 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

Member Callahan reemphasized her concerns with the Council being asked to approve the proposal without the conditions first being met and the programmatic impact that Segue has on the Central Falls School District.

6a2 - Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts (TAPA)

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to deny the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts Charter Amendment for Expansion.

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

b. New Charters: Recommendations on Preliminary Approval

6b1 - Charette Charter School

On a motion duly made by Karen Davis and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to grant preliminary approval to the Charette Charter School Proposal for a new charter to open in school year 2018-19; with final approval contingent on the completion of all pre-opening requirements and conditions established by the RI Department of Education.

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 2 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

6b2 - Wangari Maathai Community School

On a motion duly made by Karen Davis and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to grant preliminary approval to the Wangari Maathai Community School Proposal for a new charter to open in school year 2019-20; with final approval contingent on the completion of all pre-opening requirements and conditions established by the RI Department of Education.

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 2 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

6c- D. Doe v. Lincoln School Department

On a motion duly made by Karen Davis and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of D. Doe v. Lincoln School Department, the Commissioner’s decision is affirmed, as presented.

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez 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:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.