



Enclosure 2a
October 11, 2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
September 20, 2016

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone, stated for the record that Council Member Martinez would not be attending the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

Absent: Marta Martinez

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

[**Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:40 p.m.]

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 September 20, 2016

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

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

NAYS: 0

[Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:40 p.m.]

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the August 9, 2016, Council Meeting

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the August 9, 2016, Council Work Session

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,
Karin Forbes, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

Members Gaines and Purtill recused themselves from the vote as they did not attend the August 9th Meeting.

[Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:40 p.m.]

2b. Minutes of the August 30, 2016, Council 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 August 30, 2016, Council Work
Session

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes,
Jo Eva Gaines, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

Members Beretta and Purtill recused themselves from the vote as they did not attend the August 30th Work Session.

[Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:40 p.m.]

3. PRESENTATION OF AWARD CERTIFICATES

Award Certificates were presented to the Rhode Island finalists for the 2016 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 two finalists were Karen Moore, science educator at the Hathaway Elementary School in Portsmouth, and Alyssa Wood, science educator at the Sophia Academy in Providence.

3. OPEN FORUM

Erin Papa, Member of the R.I. Foreign Language Association, spoke in support of the foreign language position that was put in the PK-12 budget proposal.

Julie Motta, Chairwoman of the State English Language Advisory Council and a 6th-grade ESL teacher in Providence, spoke in opposition of raising the Praxis cut-score for ESL certification as it may further affect the shortage of diverse ESL teachers that already exists.

Laurie Grupe, member of the State English Language Advisory Council representing postsecondary education, shared her concerns on the reliance of test scores for teacher certification.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began his report by announcing that Carol Blanchette will be joining the RIDE team on October 3rd to serve as the new Chief for Teaching and Learning, a position recently vacated by Mary Ann Snider, now the Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning.

Ms. Blanchette comes to RIDE highly regarded by the field, having served in a number of leadership positions in Rhode Island, most recently as the Superintendent in the Jamestown School Department.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported that, since the presentation at the August 17th meeting of the full Board of Education on the New Skills for Youth application, RIDE has received lots of feedback. This initiative is RIDE's three-year strategy to integrate career readiness, as both a focus and as a set of experiences, ranging from exposure in the middle school to career-readiness experiences, integrated into academic experiences in high school, including internships and apprenticeships. On Friday RIDE will release a draft of the work plan, which is a culmination of six months of work, with feedback from lots of stakeholders. At the time of the draft work plan release, there will be a survey designed to generate additional feedback that will be presented to the Career Readiness Statewide Working Group, which has been advising us on this work. The final plan will be submitted on October 7th for the competition for \$1.8M in funding to support this work.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Secondary School Regulations – Feedback from Public Review and Comment

Prior to turning the conversation over to Mary Ann Snider, Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning, Commissioner Wagner shared that RIDE has just completed the public-comment period on the proposed revisions to the Secondary School Regulations. It is no surprise that the feature of the regulations that has received the most attention has been the role of test results to either be part of or not be part of a graduation requirement, with about half the people in support of and half in opposition to.

Deputy Snider went over the year-long timeline of activities, which included 75 days for public review, during which time four public hearings were held to gather public feedback on the 10 proposed changes to the regulations. Nothing really new emerged during the public comment period; however, as people read through the revisions carefully, they asked for clarification on some of the definitions and redundant language used throughout the document.

Member Callahan expressed that she has heard some concerns about language remaining in the regulations that allows local districts to decide when to make the statewide assessment part of their local graduation requirement.

Deputy Snider responded that the feedback from superintendents has been that they would like to have that flexibility.

b. Charter Schools – Overview of the R.I. Charter School Renewal Timeline and Performance Framework

Commissioner Wagner outlined the different responsibilities that the Council has in the authorization of charter schools – consideration of new charter schools, holding charter schools accountable, and requests for expansions and renewals. He then turned the conversation over to Stephen Osborn, RIDE’s Chief of Innovation.

Mr. Osborn went over the revisions to the charter performance-review system, which RIDE will use to annually review the academic, financial, and organizational performance of all charter schools and as a clear framework to guide charter -renewal evaluation and recommendation decisions to the Council, commencing next year. The revised framework is a result of a year-long engagement with a committee consisting of representatives from RIDE, the R.I. League of Charter Schools, and the R.I. Mayoral Academies, all tasked with evaluating and updating the charter-school review system. Mr. Osborn then turned the conversation over to Brian Darrow, RIDE’s Director of College and Career Readiness.

Mr. Darrow highlighted the number of charter schools (22, with 30 total schools educating more than 7,300 students, around 5% of the total R.I. student population), the different types of charter schools (3 district charters, 14 independent charters, and 5 Mayoral Academies), and the fact that the significant majority of all charter school students (around 80%) live in urban core districts. Mr. Darrow also shared the timeline for when the Council will be addressing charter-related matters in the fall of 2016 through the fall of 2017.

Next, Mr. Darrow gave an overview of the new Charter School Performance Review System. The year-long review process started in September 2015 with input from a committee of RIDE staff, charter-school leaders, the League of Charter School, and the R.I. Mayoral Academies, with support by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers on the development process. The new system focuses on key values – transparency, clarity, consistency, academic performance (as a number-one priority), and incorporating national best practices. The final framework has been reviewed by and has received positive feedback from charter-school leaders.

Mr. Darrow also went over the overall indicators to be used annually to evaluate each charter school's cohesive performance – academic, financial, organizational, and sustainability, each containing multiple and clear performance criteria.

Member Callahan asked if, when the new system is implemented and RIDE is planning to tier schools based on past performance, is everyone starting in the same place or will it be doing some variation in terms of your approach with them based on past performance under the old system.

Mr. Darrow replied that the tiers will come into play only when RIDE begins the renewal process for a school, though every year the school will receive a rating based on those four indicators. The ratings will also get reported to the Council annually. The schools will not be sorted into tiers every year because the tiers will only come into play when the renewal process begins. RIDE has started conversations with schools about the new rubric and how it will affect them.

Member Beretta inquired as to whether the indicators have changed or remained the same from the old system.

Mr. Darrow answered that it's a little bit of both. The new system is about bringing the old indicators and reorganizing them into very clear performance indicators and frameworks, which had not been done before, to guide the new evaluation process. The new process also allows for RIDE to have constructive annual conversations with the Council and the schools about their performance and avoids surprises when the schools are up for renewal.

Member Beretta asked whether a five-year renewal is mandatory or can the Council recommend a renewal for a shorter period of time if there is concern about a school's performance measures.

Mr. Osborn replied that there is the ability to renew for a shorter period of time; however, there are some challenges that can arise from a shorter period of time.

c. Overview of the Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners for the Purpose of Public Review and Comment

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic by highlighting that the Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners (ELL) are required by federal law to be updated every three years and are behind schedule. Commissioner Wagner then turned the conversation over to Deputy Snider who gave a high-level overview of the proposed revisions to the regulations.

Deputy Snider shared that the national Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) has published a suite of tools that has helped guide RIDE's thinking around the revisions of the ELL regulations and how to provide guidance to the districts on how to spend ELL funding. RIDE has been working closely with the districts to follow their work to see how we can help to make a concerted effort to integrate our work for English learners (ELs) into the fabric of regular education rather than this outside entity that is always either an add-on or, in worst case, an after-thought to the poor work of the school and the district.

Deputy Snider then went over the changing EL demographics in Rhode Island. In the 2009-10 school year there were 7,661 active Els compared with approximately 11,000 in 2015-16; and she noted how the regulations need to reflect this trend. Deputy Snider then turned the conversation over to David Sienko, RIDE's Director of Student, Community, and Academic Supports.

Mr. Sienko went over the eight major sections of the regulations that are being either revised or added, which might generate public comment: updating language throughout, cultural competence for students and teachers, whether a district will be considered high- or low-incidence, administrators of programs at the local level, program models, student placement, time requirements, and family engagement.

A red-lined version of the proposed revisions to the regulations will be presented to the Council at its October 11th meeting, for the purpose of public review and comment.

d. Fiscal Year 2017 Revised Budget and Fiscal Year 2018 Current Service Level Budget Proposals

Commissioner Wagner stated that today's presentation will include an updated revised budget with some additional costs, which were not available the last time RIDE presented to the Council, as well as the model for covering the cost of up to three tests for students taking Advanced Placement courses. In the constrained budget, rather than any specific cuts, RIDE is proposing a 3% cut across all of the categories, which is aligned with last year's percentage, as opposed to the state's up-to-8% recommendation. Commissioner Wagner then turned the conversation over to Mark Dunham, RIDE's Director of Finance.

Mr. Dunham went over a PowerPoint presentation on the FY 2017 Revised and FY 2018 Current Service Level Budget Proposals. He highlighted some of the changes to the Revised Budget since the last presentation to the Council:

- General Revenue - \$59,486 increase, the result of several minor adjustments, an increase to cover the costs of redesigning the RIDE webpage to comply with federal mandates, as well as some unanticipated legal fees
- Federal Programs - \$1.3M increase due to carryover funds
- Restricted Receipts - \$143,054 increase due to additional E-Rate costs
- Capital Projects - \$3.5M increase; including \$75,000 for modifications to the Davies Career and Tech High School to accommodate a new welding program and \$2.3M Acceleration of the MET HVAC project

Mr. Dunham also went over the FY 2018 Current Service Level Budget funding sources (general revenue, federal funds, restricted receipts, RICAP, and other funds), as well as new initiatives (kindergarten entry profile, ELL/world language leadership position, and career-readiness fellows) and other continued requests (Advanced Coursework Network, salary/turnover, technology support, and an additional FTE to support early learning program).

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2017 Revised Budget and Fiscal Year 2018 Current Service Level Budget Proposals

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 approves and transmits the Fiscal Year 2017 Revised and Fiscal Year 2018 Current Service Level Budgets to the Rhode Island State Budget Office. We further approve their transmission to the R.I. Board of Education for final approval.

Vote: 8 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, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

b. Approval of the proposed ETS Teacher Certification Tests and Passing Scores (Braille, ASL, ESL)

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the revised English to Speakers of Other Languages certification test with a passing score of 155.

Vote: 8 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, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

Commissioner Wagner expressed that there has been lots of discussion around lowering the cut score, and although a compelling argument that we need more teachers in a hard-to-staff area and we need those teachers to be representative of the communities that they serve, there is always a balance maintaining a standard for the profession. He knows it is confusing, but the proposed cut score is not a higher cut score. It's a different test; it's a different cut score, they are not comparable, and it's the same standard, the standard is just qualified.

Like any new test, the test is put before a panel of educators, which in this case was a national panel of educators with Rhode Island representation. The panel made a judgement on this test of what the cut score should be for a just-qualified professional on this test, just like they made a judgement on the prior just qualified test, apart from whether or not a test should be part of teacher certification. Although the score is six points higher, the scores are not comparable. Also, anyone taking this test is already a certified teacher, so this will not block anyone from entering into the teaching profession. This is about holding a bar for individuals getting an extension who are already certified. To override the recommendation from a group of teachers who were paneled for this purpose is a big deal and will set a precedent.

Member Callahan voiced that although she hears the argument about empowering folks and not overruling the panel's recommendation, she remains troubled by the concerns conveyed this evening by the higher-education folks.

Commissioner Wagner replied that RIDE and postsecondary education had an honest exchange of ideas but could reach consensus, partly because the psychometric issue is so confusing that it's really hard to explain. He also thinks that it's about different professional opinions of whether or not a certification test should or shouldn't serve, especially in a high need area.

Council members requested that as soon as enough state or national data, including demographic data, become available, the cut-score be revisited.

And further,

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 new American Sign Language Proficiency Interview test with a passing score of 170

Vote: 8 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, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

And further,

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the new Braille Proficiency certification test with a passing score of 169.

Vote: 8 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, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Vote: 8 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, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.