



Enclosure 2a
January 6, 2016

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
November 18, 2015

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Work Session was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at the Rhode Island Department of Education, Room 501, 255 Westminister Street, Providence, R.I.

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the Work Session of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

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

[*Ex-Officio, non-voting member]
[**Arrived at 5:50 p.m.]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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 accepts the agenda for the Work Session of November 18, 2015, with the proviso that there may be a need to change the order of the agenda as Governor Raimondo will be joining the meeting to offer some remarks.

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

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

NAYS: 0

[Amy Beretta arrived at 5:50 p.m.]

2. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began by highlighting some of the updates on the evening's agenda. He reported on the PARCC scores, which were released the previous day, and stated that the main purpose of the assessment is not only about the test scores, but about the courses that support of the kinds of learning experiences and the kinds of courses that we want our students to have. There is very exciting work happening statewide around access to advanced and enhanced coursework that is designed to be not only rigorous, but relevant for our students. There are also some very exciting things going in the next generation career and technical education and student access to early college high school experiences.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported that RIDE has issued a RFP and has put out an all call to providers, including school districts and colleges, who can offer good access to advanced course work. RIDE will review the providers and preapprove the course offerings to ensure that they are valuable and give school districts the option if they wish to opt-in to this advanced coursework network giving them the ability through collaboration to make them even more of it available to more students, not just those who might have been previously identified for accelerated coursework.

He also talked about opening up the conversation on the graduation requirements and how to maintain rigor and meaning of the diploma while expanding options for students. RIDE is planning on scheduling conversations across the state with stakeholder groups and will bring back to the Council a summary of those discussions and a preliminary recommendation in the spring.

He acknowledged that recently Council Member Beretta, along with Mary Ann Snider, a representative from the Governor's Office, and two legislators, went to Washington, D.C., to present and share best practices with other states on R.I.'s Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Equity Plan.

Commissioner Wagner ended by reporting that the 30-day public comment period on the proposed revisions to the Regulations Governing the School Calendar and the Length of the School Day that the Council recently approved was coming to an end and that a public hearing has been scheduled on Monday, November 23rd.

At this time, Chair McConaghy welcomed Governor Raimondo, who came to speak on the PARCC Assessment results.

Governor Raimondo stated that although the results were alarming, they were not surprising and it's a real call to action for all of us and that the clock is ticking. We have got to get it right as you only get once chance to go through school. It is not of any value to blame anybody, the test, nor the time to water down our curriculum or assessments, as young people need skills to get jobs. Massachusetts is doing pretty well, so let's learn from their success and act with urgency and get to work, as we owe it to Rhode Island families.

Governor Raimondo ended by emphasizing that every kid matters and that we need to give them a chance to be successful. We need to get to work, collaborate, innovate, act with urgency and get this done. This is a moment for us to come together and get to work, in a way that's fair to teachers, parents and kids.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Encl3a - Career and Technical Education Board and Trust/PTech - Update

Stephen Osborn, Chief of RIDE's Division of Accelerating School Performance, along with Al Lubrano, Chair of the Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees (CTE), and Dan Sutton, P-TECH's (Pathways to Technology, Early College High School) Implementation Manager at the R.I. Commerce Corporation, provided an update on the progress underway to increase the career readiness of high school students as Rhode Island looks to develop programs that support the need of employers while building upon the work that's been led to date by our Career and Tech Centers and comprehensive high schools. These programs will prepare students for high-wage, high-potential jobs in a growing market or a four-year postsecondary-education institution.

Mr. Lubrano explained that the CTE Board of Trustees, a group appointed by the Governor, is in the process of defining clear standards of achievement in three initially defined priority sectors: construction, health career, and manufacturing. The standards will be approved by RIDE, the Department of Labor and Training and the Governor's Workforce Board, and programs will need to meet these standards in order to be recognized as a RIDE approved program and qualify for funding.

The group is tasked with creating a biannual plan for career and technical education, which sets goals and expectations for what needs to be done to create high-quality career and technical programs. The group will present an annual report in the spring of 2016 to the Board of Education and the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education with recommendations to improve CTE programs.

The emerging CTE initiative P-TECH is a six-year program, grades 9 through 14, which links secondary education, postsecondary education, and industry partners to prepare students for success. When students in the P-TECH program graduate, they will have a high-school diploma and an associate's degree, at no cost to them or their families, as well as first-in-line consideration for job openings at the industry partner for their program. RIDE is presently working with the Commerce Corporation to identify interested schools and industry partners to launch three P-TECH programs at the start of the next school year.

Encl3b - Dual and Concurrent Enrollment - Update

Stephen Osborn also briefed the Council on the current status of the Prepare RI (dual and concurrent enrollment) initiative, which the Board of Education launched with new regulations and eligibility criteria last April. Through funding from Governor Raimondo and the General Assembly, RIDE has been able to ensure that all qualified public-school students can access dual (high-schools students taking courses on the postsecondary campus) or concurrent (college courses for credit that certified educators teach at the high school) coursework this year, at no cost to the students or their families.

RIDE is in the process of collecting data on participation in dual and concurrent enrollment programs. Preliminary data show a steady increase in access to early-college courses: for example, a 49-percent increase in enrollments for students at Central Falls High School, and an increase from 35 students last year to more than 100 participating students this year at Cranston High School East. RIDE is working with the Office of Postsecondary Education to further expand course offerings for the next school year. In March, RIDE plans to present the Board of Education with a full course listing and an update on participation rates.

Encl3c - Funding Formula Working Group - Update

Andrea Castaneda, Chief of RIDE's Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, gave an update on the materials presented and shared publicly at the first two of the six Funding Formula Working Group meetings, which focused on the purpose of the working group and differences in financial obligations between traditional districts and public schools of choice. The next two meetings will focus on unique student/school issues, efficiencies and outcomes, and R.I.'s return on investment. The final two meetings will focus on crafting recommendations on the major issues raised during the public meetings and drafting a report to be presented to the Council prior to presenting it to the Governor.

Encl3d - PARCC Assessments - Update

Mary Ann Snider, Chief of RIDE's Division of Educator Excellence, began her update by echoing Commissioner Wagner's commitment to ensuring that everything we do is anchored in teaching and learning. She reported that RIDE held a series of briefings for superintendents and principals in an effort to model the kind of conversations that it hopes they replicate as they engage with their own communities on the results.

Ms. Snider went over a PowerPoint presentation on the timeline for improving student achievement, the reason why R.I. chose the PARCC test, and understanding the PARCC results. When looking at the results, folks need to keep in mind that there is always a predictable dip in performance in the first year of implementation of a new assessment and that this year; many students were adjusting to the transition from a paper test to a new computer-delivered assessment.

Commissioner Wagner warned not to put too much focus on the scores as things will get better and the pace will start to accelerate as students are exposed to cumulative years of instruction in these deeper sets of learning expectations. There is definitely a lot work to be done and these results provide meaningful information for districts as they get back to work and focus on improving instruction.

4. ADJOURNMENT

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 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, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

Member Purtil departed at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.