



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**January 12, 2015**

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Monday, January 12, 2015, at the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, R.I.

Chair Guida welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

He noted for the record that Commissioner Gist would not be joining the meeting and that, in the Commissioner's absence, David Abbott, Deputy Commissioner, would represent her.

**Present:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**[Member Callahan arrived at 5:20]**

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes 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 January 12, 2015

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

**YEAS:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** 0

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**2a. Minutes of the October 30, 2014, Council Work Session**

On a motion duly made by Eva-Marie Mancuso and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the October 30, 2014 Council Work Session

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Member Gaines recused herself from this vote, as she was not in attendance at the October 30, 2014, Work Session]**

**2b. Minutes of the October 30, 2014, Council Executive Session**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the October 30, 2014, Council Executive Session

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Board Chair Mancuso and Members Callahan, Purtill, and Gaines recused themselves from this vote, as they were not in attendance at the October 30, 2014, Council Executive Session]**

**2c. Minutes of the November 10, 2014, Council Meeting**

On a motion duly made by Eva-Marie Mancuso and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the November 10, 2014, Council Meeting

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Member Gaines recused herself from this vote, as she was not in attendance at the November 10, 2014 Council Meeting]**

**2d. Minutes of the November 10, 2014, Executive Session**

On a motion duly made by Eva-Marie Mancuso and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the November 10, 2014, Executive Session

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Members Callahan, Gaines, and Purtill recused themselves from this vote, as they were not in attendance at the November 10, 2014 Executive Session]**

**2e. Minutes of the November 17, 2014, Work Session**

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the November 17, 2014, Council Work Session

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines  
Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and  
Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**2f. Minutes of the November 17, 2014, Executive Session**

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Eva-Marie Mancuso, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the November 17, 2014, Executive Session

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**[Member Callahan arrives at this time]**

**2g. Minutes of the December 11, 2014, Special Work Session on the Strategic Planning**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the December 11, 2014 Special Work Session on the Strategic Planning

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

### 3. OPEN FORUM

Before beginning Open Forum, Chair Guida went over some ground rules and reminded the audience to limit comments to two minutes or less and to avoid redundancy; he also suggested that speakers addressing the Council on the same topic as others consider appearing on record stating that they agree with what others may have said.

- Four individuals spoke in favor of the Highlander Charter School Amendment Request
- Six individuals spoke in favor of the Times2 STEM Academy Amendment Request
- Nine individuals spoke in favor of the International Charter School Amendment Request
- Eight individuals spoke in favor of the Beacon Charter School Amendment Request
- Twenty individuals spoke in favor of the Kingston Hill Academy Amendment Request
- Four individuals spoke in opposition to the Kingston Hill Academy Amendment Request
- One individual spoke in favor of all the charter school Amendment Requests
- Three individuals spoke in opposition to the Proposed Amendments to the Secondary School Regulations

Documents provided to the Board of Education by Open Forum speakers are on file at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Chair Guida stated for the record that Kevin Gallagher, Governor Raimondo's Deputy Chief of Staff, was in the audience.

### 4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Chair Mancuso reported that the Council on Postsecondary Education met on January 7<sup>th</sup>, when it approved several property-related matters, including the early defeasance of a CCRI bond as well as CCRI faculty tenure recommendations.

She also informed the Council that the federal government is requiring significant language changes within Title IX related to the sexual harassment and sexual violence policies for institutions of higher learning. The three institutions are currently involved in this process.

Also, the Postsecondary strategic planning process is ongoing, with the Council's approval of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner's reorganization plan and the Complete College Rhode Island objectives.

Finally, she informed the Council that the Postsecondary Council has established two subcommittees, the Facilities Committee, whose mission it is to work with the institutions on their 5-year capital planning, and the Personnel Committee, whose role is to evaluate annually

the performance of the presidents at the three public institutions of higher education as well as of the commissioner.

**5. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Chair Guida reported that on the previous Saturday he attended the kick-off event of the Ambassador Design Team, which will be working on developing Rhode Island’s next strategic plan. The team spent the first half of the day working with the responses to the statewide survey results and the second half starting to develop the initial contours around their draft plan values. There was also a presentation by Stephanie Geller from R.I. KidsCount and as well as welcoming remarks from Kevin Gallagher, Governor Raimondo’s Deputy Chief of Staff. Chair Guida praised the team members for their commitment to and enthusiasm for the work and he is very much looking forward to working with them over the next six months.

**6. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER**

In Commissioner Gist’s absence, David Abbott, Deputy Commissioner, reported that on January 8<sup>th</sup> the education periodical, Education Week, released its annual report called Quality Counts. Notoriously tough graders, it ranked Rhode Island at 13<sup>th</sup> in the country, a jump from 17<sup>th</sup> the previous year. Rhode Island also received high marks (7<sup>th</sup> in the country) in terms of our financial system, both in terms of adequacy and expenditures on education and equity. Rhode Island, however, continues to lag behind the neighboring New England states and across the country in terms of achievement gaps among student groups, especially English Learners and Hispanic students. It was also disappointing to receive a ranking of 32<sup>nd</sup> on early education, due to Rhode Island’s relatively low enrollments in full-day preschool and full-day kindergarten. We very optimistic that we will continue to rise in this area, thanks to the recent Preschool Expansion Grant, our full-day kindergarten grants, and the Exceed initiative, which will support quality improvement in our early learning schools and programs.

**7. ACTION ITEMS**

**7a. Approval of the Revised Certification Tests, for the Purpose of Public Review and Comment**

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, for the purpose of public review and comment, the proposed revised certification tests and passing scores, as presented.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,  
Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence  
Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

### **7b. Approval of the Proposed Amendments to the Secondary School Regulations**

Based upon the public testimony heard earlier in the evening, Chair Guida asked for a motion to open the discussion, allowing Council members the opportunity to have a thorough discussion prior to voting.

The motion was made by Member Beretta and seconded by Member Gaines.

Chair Guida then asked Deputy Abbott to provide some comment on the matter. Deputy Abbott explained that the sole change since the proposed regulations went out for public comment is a sentence added to section L-6-3.3. The sentence reads that LEAs may choose to use the state assessment or other standardized assessment as one of the local graduation requirements prior to the 2020 date set forth but no earlier than for the Class of 2017.

Board Chair Mancuso asked if the change meant that the regulations would have to go out for public comment again. Deputy Abbott answered that it is really a judgment call on the part of the Council as opposed to a legal one.

Member Callahan voiced that she had missed the last Work Session when the proposed change was discussed and, after finding out this evening that it had not been substantively discussed by the Council and considering the implications the change will cause, she believes that it rises to the level of the Council needing to further deliberate prior to making a decision.

Member Gaines shared that, although she was at the Work Session, she somehow missed the proposed change and is concerned about the inequity that it will pose across districts. She also believes that the Council either needs to have a thorough discussion or send it out for public comment again.

Member Purtill asked for an amended motion of the proposed language to reflect changing the date from 2014 to 2020 and leaving the rest of the language out. Member Callahan seconded the motion.

Board Chair Mancuso suggested a friendly amendment to Member Purtill's motion in that the regulations go out for public comment again.

Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Accelerating School Performance, clarified that, as

reported at the last Work Session, the change was suggested by Superintendent Ricci during the public comment period; Supt. Ricci asked for clarification around having the ability to use the assessment as a graduation requirement between 2017 and 2020. The way it is currently written in the regulations, it is not expressly prohibited, And, in an effort to clarify that and to reduce potential confusion, RIDE added that sentence.

Chair Guida asked for a motion to table the discussion until the Council's next Work Session

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education table the discussion until the next Work Session

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, , Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: Amy Beretta

### **7c. Approval of Nominees to the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees**

On a motion duly made by Eva-Marie Mancuso and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of Amanda Montgomery as the new Chair of the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees, and further approves the appointment of Nora Meah as a new member of the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees , as presented.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0



**7d. Approval of Nominee to the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees**

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 appointment of Ronald E. Pitt as a new member of the  
Central Falls School District Board of Trustees, as presented.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members  
voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,  
Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence  
Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**7e. Approval of Transfer Agreement: Warwick Career and Technical Center**

On a motion duly made by Eva-Marie Mancuso and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines,  
it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education  
approves the Property Transfer Agreement for the Warwick Area  
Career and Technical Center, as finalized by the State Properties  
Commission, provided the allocation of the funds are available in  
the approved Capital Budget, as presented.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members  
voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,  
Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence  
Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**7f1. Approval of the Beacon Charter School for the Arts Charter Amendment Request**

Member Purtill voiced that he will continue to vote against expansion of charters  
until the funding issues are addressed. While the money follows the student to the  
charter school, districts continue to struggle to fund necessary programs.

Member Callahan reiterated Member Purtill's concerns and commended all of the parents and teachers who came out to testify in support of the charter amendments. She then urged her fellow Council Members to hold off on granting any amendments until fiscal-impact statements are provided and reviewed.

Member Beretta asked Mr. Osborn to expound on the Beacon Charter School's plan to rectify their mathematics test scores. Mr. Osborn answered that RIDE has received some information from the school but has not officially received the plan that Beacon will be putting in place to raise its mathematics scores. Member Beretta commended the school for all of the wonderful things that they are doing, but she is very concerned with the drop in the Beacon math scores and wants the Council and RIDE to work with the school in getting the situation rectified.

Members Gaines and Forbes also shared their concerns about the math scores and suggested delaying the vote until RIDE has the chance to review and approve the school's plan.

Chair Guida asked for a motion to table the favored motion.

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education table the favored motion

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

## **7f2. Approval of the Highlander Charter School Charter Amendment Request**

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Eva-Marie Mancuso, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to approve the Highlander Charter School amendment, permitting the school to enroll an additional 133 students in grades 7 through 12 and in prekindergarten.

**Vote:** 7 members voted in the affirmative and 2 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

### **7f3. Approval of the International Charter School Amendment Request**

On a motion duly made by Eva-Marie Mancuso and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to approve the International Charter School amendment, permitting the school to enroll an additional 306 students in kindergarten through grade 8

**Vote:** 7 members voted in the affirmative and 2 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

### **7f4. Approval of the Kingston Hill Charter School Amendment Request**

A motion was duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Eva-Marie Mancuso.

Member Gaines voiced that she could not support the motion as presented at this time because the objections that were raised earlier in the meeting were troublesome to her in the area of governance and money and she would like RIDE to seek further and more in-depth discovery before she can support the expansion.

Deputy Abbott explained that RIDE looked into the governance and fiscal allegations that it received earlier in the day from Mr. Jones and that the allegations were without merit.

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to approve the Kingston Hill Charter amendment, permitting the school to enroll its authorized quantity of students, 260, in kindergarten through grade 5.

**Vote:** 6 members voted in the affirmative and 3 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** Colleen Callahan, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

### **7f5. Approval of the Times2 STEM Academy Amendment Request**

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to approve the Times2 STEM Academy amendment, permitting the school to enroll an additional 80 students in Kindergarten through grade 12.

**Vote:** 7 members voted in the affirmative and 2 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** Colleen Callahan, Lawrence Purtill

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

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

**Vote:** 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** 0

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.