



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
October 24, 2017

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the October 24, 2017, meeting 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, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, *Thalia Phillip, and Lawrence Purtill

*Ex-officio, non-voting member

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of October 24, 2017

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

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

YEAS: 9

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the October 3, 2017, Council Meeting

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 the minutes of the October 3, 2017, Council Meeting

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

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

YEAS: 9

NAYS: 0

Next, Chair McConaghy recognized and congratulated Council Member Marta Martinez as a recipient of the 2017 YWCA Rhode Island Women of Achievement Award. Member Martinez is one of 11 women who are being recognized for their accomplishments in industry, culture and public service.

3. OPEN FORUM

Donna Rowland, introduced herself as the new Co-Chair of the RI Teacher Advisory Council (RITAC). She shared that RITAC's focus this year will be on the well-being and safety of the schools, which ties-in nicely with the Social and Emotional Learning Standards that the Council is being asked to endorse this evening.

Reverend Aucoin commended the Council for wanting to protect transgender students in the schools, however, he does have some concerns with the draft regulations relating to rights and protections of transgender and gender-nonconforming students.

Marcela Bentacur, ACLU, spoke in support of the draft regulations relating to rights and protections of transgender and gender-nonconforming students.

Pat Bellart, RI Regional Adult Learning and RI Workforce Alliance, spoke in opposition to RIDE's proposed budget cuts to adult education.

Ted Donovan, Firefighter and EMT for the Carolina Fire Department, spoke in opposition to RIDE's proposed budget cuts to adult education.

Karyn Lowe, Senate Policy Office, encouraged Council Members to attend the upcoming 6th Annual Senate Education Summit and conveyed the Senate's appreciation for the Council's support in past years.

Rainbow Chen, Brown University Student, spoke in support of the Social and Emotional Learning Standards.

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 began his report by sharing that this year's release of the accountability system under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) will be the last one before turning over to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In this year's release, 28 schools were recognized as commended schools with nine of those schools having achieved commended status for three consecutive years. Two Providence schools (Providence Career and Technical Academy and Asa Messer Elementary) and Shea High School in Pawtucket, exited school improvement status. RIDE will be closely monitoring these schools' success and will pull them back in for additional support if necessary. RIDE will also be conducting exit interviews to determine what worked, analyze what's working and what's not working at schools still identified, and will come back with a report in early 2018 highlighting what it learned and what is being done to help support districts transition to ESSA. Transitioning to a new system of accountability under ESSA allows for more consistent and coherent user experiences.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported that RIDE has released the final year of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science Assessment. There has been a disconnect between what is being taught in terms of science standards and what is being measured in terms of student progress. RIDE is transitioning to new assessments for Science in partnership with Vermont and is encouraging other states to consider collaborating with them.

Commissioner Wagner went over the College Board results regarding AP participation and performance. He explained that across Rhode Island, both AP test participation and performance have increased. Increasing access to and participation in advanced coursework, including AP, is a key part of RIDE's strategy. Commissioner Wagner stated that he views this as being a leading indicator that will produce results in some lagging indicators, such as graduation rates and test scores. RIDE also released an amendment to the graduation rate due to 343 students being placed into a different cohort (for one year only), resulting in a 2.5% point over-estimate in the 2016 graduation rate. The district with the most students impacted (77) was Providence, while other school districts faced little to no impact.

Commissioner Wagner ended his report by reflecting upon RIDE's first PrepareRI Summit held the previous Saturday. He explained that PrepareRI is one of the most ambitious plans in the nation to improve youth career readiness. Vocational schools have historically served as a way to prepare students to do something narrow very well, while today's career education is much broader in offerings. The ideal is for students to be able to balance hands-on applied experiential opportunities aligned to 21st century careers with academics, which are based on and predictive of postsecondary experiences. The event was a convening of a range of voices, including postsecondary leaders, administrators, business and community representatives, as well as families and students. PrepareRI Summits will become regular events, with the next one scheduled for spring 2018.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Draft Regulations Relating to Rights and Protections of Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students for discussion

Commissioner Wagner shared that Rhode Island is one of the states where gender, gender identity, and gender expression is a protected class by Rhode Island state statute. While the vast majority of Rhode Island school districts have already adopted policies to implement this statutory requirement, a number of districts have not; therefore, the proposed regulation will require all school districts to have a policy in place. This responsibility falls under the civil rights and/or bullying aspect of regulatory requirements, which is the responsibility of RIDE and the Commissioner. The proposed regulation will go through a 30-day mandatory state regulatory review process, followed by a period of public engagement, before it becomes effective.

Council members expressed the need for RIDE to impose a timeframe on districts to ensure that local policies are adopted and put in place in a timely manner.

b. Capital Fund Projects

Cindy Brown, RIDE's Director of Statewide Efficiencies, gave an overview of the Fiscal Year 2018 School Building Authority (SBA) Capital Fund Project Priorities and RIDE's recommendations. She explained that these funds may be used to repair public school facilities and is distributed on a priority basis. RIDE received 63 applications from twelve LEAs totaling \$29,993,894, while the Fiscal Year 2018 State Budget allocated \$9.1M to the SBA Capital Fund. The SBA at RIDE was able to allocate savings toward the SBA capital Fund and as a result was able to award \$10,568,877 toward the Capital Fund Projects in total. At the November 7, the Council will be asked to approve the allocation of \$10.6M to the proposed eight priority districts/22 projects located in Pawtucket, Providence, Central Falls, Woonsocket, East Providence, Charliho, Scituate, and Foster-Glocester.

c. Update on Charter Schools

Commissioner Wagner shared that the purpose of this evening's discussion is to provide a landscape to the charter conversations and decisions that will occur over the next couple of months. He explained that RIDE staff has been meeting with applicant teams to share the Commissioner's recommendations and schools have an opportunity to prepare a written response to the recommendation to the Council.

Next, Brian Darrow, RIDE's Director of College and Career Readiness, went over the Fall/Winter 2017 charter timeline and shared that in the upcoming Council meetings, Council members will have the opportunity to ask questions directly to charter school leaders.

Paula Barney, Charter School Coordinator, provided an overview of the charter renewal process. She explained that this year there are eight charters undergoing renewal decisions, representing approximately 1/3 of all Rhode Island charters. She went over the key features of the new performance review system, which includes annual ratings, academic performance expectations, informed risk-based reviews, and consistent and predictable five-year renewal recommendations. It is a lengthy and rigorous renewal process aimed at ensuring transparency and objectivity when making recommendations. In preparation for the upcoming Council meeting on charter renewals, Council members will receive an enclosure memo for each charter undergoing renewal with RIDE's recommendation overview, renewal report, annual performance dashboards, as well as the charter's written response to the renewal report.

Next, Pascale Thompson, Charter School Specialist, provided an overview of the requests for expansion:

- The Greene School proposes to expand enrollment by an additional 30 students within current grades, by 2020.
- The Segue Institute for Learning proposes to expand their current enrollment by 120 students and expanding to grades K-8, by 2026.
- Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts proposes to expand current enrollment by 50 students within current grades, by 2020.

And new charter proposals:

- Charette Charter School, to open in Providence for grades 9-12.
- Wangari Maathai Community School to open in Providence for grades K-8.

She explained that new to the process this year is that the Local Impact Analysis conducted by RIDE was posted online prior to the start of the public hearings. In addition, evaluation feedback was provided to applicant teams prior to the capacity interview, and RIDE contracted with an independent expert evaluator for evaluating new school proposals. RIDE facilitated two public hearings for each proposal during the fall, and the total public comment period was extended from 60 to 120 days.

In preparation for discussion of the new and expanding charter school proposals, Council members will receive an enclosure memo for each charter that includes RIDE's recommendation overview, quality evaluation of the proposal, the charter's response to the recommendation, RIDE's local impact analysis, and (if received) other local impact analyses.

6. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2018 Revised and Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Submittals

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 and transmits the FY 2019 Current Service Level and the FY 2018 Revised Budgets to the RI State Budget Office. We further approve their transmission to the RI Board of Education for final approval.

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

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

YEAS: 9

NAYS: 0

b. Endorsement of the RI Social and Emotional Learning Standards

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 endorses the RI Social and Emotional Learning Standards, as presented

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

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

YEAS: 9

NAYS: 0

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair McConaghy entertained a motion to enter into executive session for discussion of:

7a. Contract renewal evaluation of Commissioner Wagner, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1)

Chair McConaghy noted for the record that Commissioner Wagner had been notified of his right to have the discussion in item 7a held in open session and that he has indicated no objection to the Council proceeding in executive session.

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education convenes in executive session pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1) for the reason set forth above.

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

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

NAYS: 0

All non-Council members in the audience were excused at this time.

The Council reconvened in open session at 7:10 p.m.

Chair McConaghy reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

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 seal the minutes of the executive session held on August 15, 2017

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

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

NAYS: 0

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Marta Martinez, 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: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.