



Enclosure 2a
August 3, 2022

**Minutes of the February 22, 2022
Remote Meeting**

Pursuant to Executive Order 22-01, this meeting was held remotely.

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chair Barbara Cottam called the February 22, 2022, meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Due to social distancing restrictions, this meeting was held remotely:

Remote Participation:

Michael Almeida
*Milly Asherov
Colleen Callahan
Barbara Cottam
Karen Davis
Timothy DelGiudice
Patricia DiCenso
Dennis Duffy
Jo Eva Gaines
**Rachelle Green
*Mike Grey
Thomas Izzo
Marta Martinez
Lawrence Purtill

Absent:

Amy Beretta
*Margo Cook
Michael Mello
Marianne Monte
*Stephan Pryor
Jeffery Williams

*Ex-officio, non-voting member

**Arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Public access was provided to attendees of this Zoom webinar in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the provisions of the Executive Order; contact information was provided for those experiencing technical difficulties.

After going over some ground rules, Chair Cottam asked for a motion for acceptance of the agenda.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Cottam asked for a motion to accept the agenda of the February 22, 2022, meeting.

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the remote meeting of February 22, 2021

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Green joined the meeting after the approval of the agenda]

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the November 16, 2021, Meeting

Chair Cottam asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the November 16, 2021, meeting and noted that Members Callahan, Duffy, and Martinez, had to abstain as they did not attend the November 16, 2021, meeting.

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the November 16, 2021, meeting

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Thomas Izzo, Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Green joined the meeting after the approval of the minutes]

3. OPEN FORUM

Four individuals addressed the Board.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

- Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by acknowledging a few important observances. She recognized that February is Black History Month and expressed that she is proud to celebrate the many accomplishments of the Black community locally and nationally, pushing past the figures that we all know, and although necessary, it cannot be the end all be all when we talk about Black history and the importance of what it means for our students. She also shared that as part of National School Counseling Week, early this month, RIDE took some time to recognize the amazing work being done in schools by talented counselors, who are the backbone of schools, and who keep kids on track.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green shared that last week she joined Governor McKee and other state and local leaders at a release event for the 2022 School Building Authority Report, *Renewing the Dream*," which features the state's continued work to build high-quality school facilities across the state. The event was held at the Frank Spaziano Elementary School in Providence, which will see a complete renovation and expansion. Commissioner Infante-Green underscored the importance of the innovative effort to transform the old Windmill Elementary School in Providence's North End, which will be the Narducci Learning Center, into swing space to host students temporarily to enable construction to take place across Providence. The report is the School Building Authority's (SBA) first report since 2017 and provides an in-depth look at the results of progress made across the state on using the funds from the 2018, \$250M school construction bond. The report showcases eleven case studies on major renovations or full building replacements that have been completed across the state, as well as another six ongoing projects. It also lays out the necessity of continued funding for school construction through the Governor's proposed \$250M bond initiative. Included in the bond initiative is specific funding for the Facility Equity Initiative, a program to provide underserved districts with greater access to school construction funding. The first Facility Equity Initiative awards were distributed at the event and provided \$20M in funding to Central Falls, Woonsocket, Pawtucket, Providence, and West Warwick, school districts.

- Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Dr. Shannon Gilkey, Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, began by expressing his excitement on Governor McKee mentioning in his State of the State Address his commitment of \$22.5M to work with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) and execute a statewide effort to bring students and adults back into the postsecondary pipeline.

Next, Commissioner Gilkey reported that he has been watching the National Higher Education Ecosystem really refocus itself on the outcomes of our institutions and our state systems in two major ways – 1 - college value – how institutions in states’ higher education systems are ensuring that students and states are really getting the value for their investment in postsecondary outcomes. He shared that recently, the U.S. Department of Education republished and updated its college report card since 2018, and the report card really starts shifting the information given to parents and families about where they can go to receive a postsecondary education and what value that has on their investment. The second one is that the Georgetown Center for Education and the Economy released a first of its kind dashboard for consumers on postsecondary education and the value of that investment to earnings that they have for those occupations and those institutions. OPC is watching this as a national trend to ensure that here in Rhode Island the investments that we have in postsecondary education and the outcomes that are associated with that are really in keeping with the national trends and pushing innovation in that direction.

Commissioner Gilkey ended his report by sharing that about a year ago, the Council on Postsecondary Education passed an action agenda called Meeting the Moment, with one of the four priority areas being to really focus on transfer. OPC has been working with the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island, to really take a deep dive over the last nine months on how to really expand and deepen our transfer work. Data shows that we don’t have 100 percent of students coming from our two-year institutions to our four-years institutions, so we want to make sure we are pushing out and expanding those pipelines for students to transfer. Transfer is important for two reasons – four-year degrees for median family earnings and individual earnings over their lifetime pay much more than their two-year counterparts. We know that if we look at community by community across the state, some of our most underserved populations, don’t have four-year degrees, therefore, the transfer must be a critical component of our postsecondary ecosystem. Commissioner Gilkey noted that transfer has been a focus in Rhode Island over the last several years and applauded the three institutions of higher education for coming together, focusing on it, and having a proposed agenda to move it forward.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Update on the Higher Education Academy

Commissioner Gilkey began by reiterating that in his State of the State Address, the Governor mentioned a significant investment in postsecondary education for Rhode Island and named the Higher Education Academy. As part of OPC’s proposal to the Governor, the office built an investment proposal, and in true collaboration, reached out to RIDE to invest on those K-12 students who may have experienced learning loss and fallen further behind, because of the pandemic. The objective of the Higher Education Academy is to really target the communities and populations that were left behind and suffered because of the pandemic. Once the legislature approves the Governor’s proposal of the \$2.5M investment, it will expand and deepen personalized navigation, into a postsecondary program, workforce training option, and remove any other barrier to get Rhode Islanders to complete a postsecondary program and attain a credential. This program could also target some specific pathways to fill current labor shortages.

Member Purtill commended the program and expressed that his organization (NEARI) is willing to do anything to help.

b. Update on PrepareRI

Spencer Sherman, RIDE's Chief of Innovation, introduced Liz Texeira, RIDE's Director of the Office of College and Career Readiness; Dr. Tammy Warner, Assistant Commissioner of Postsecondary Academic and Student Affairs; Alyssa Alvarado, Executive Director, Governor's Workforce Board; and Julissa Disu, Director of Youth Career Readiness Programs, Governor's Workforce Board, who presented on the plans for the next stage of the work and what that will look like.

Mr. Sherman framed the discussion by sharing that there are three different state agencies working closely together on a joint common plan for PrepareRI, a plan aimed at preparing all students in the state for success in college and careers.

The team presented on the need for PrepareRI as the path from K-12 education to postsecondary education, like a relay race; frequently hard to hand off the baton between systems, leading to gaps, which is a major obstacle to students' success in college and career. PrepareRI creates a connected and aligned system to college and career readiness, with supports to reengage opportunity youth that get disconnected from the system. The program, which launched in 2017 with a \$2M New Skills for Youth grant from JP Morgan Chase, benefits students, businesses, and the economy. They reemphasized that the program is an interagency initiative to support youth in Rhode Island and is built on the belief that all students should be prepared for success in college and career. They also shared the program's original goals versus accomplishments – priorities; baseline (2014-2015); goals for 2020; and accomplishments for 2020-2021, which will be updated annually on RIDE's data center, an interactive dashboard where all the PrepareRI data over the years can be found. The team also presented PrepareRI's 2.0 scope, highlighting the overlap of the work at the intersection of at least two agencies as well as the student transitions between systems. The 2.0 plan will take us from 2022 through 2027 and has three critical areas – academic readiness; career and college knowledge; and employment preparation; as well as goals for each of the levels – middle school, high school, postsecondary, and opportunity youth. The focus of the plan is to ensure that all students are academically prepared to make an authentic choice about their next steps, college, or career, as they need to be able to effectively navigate postsecondary life, and ultimately identify a fulfilling career.

Board Chair Cottam asked who is tracking the progress of each of the elements and requested that the Board get an annual update on the progress of the goals.

Mr. Spencer replied that each agency (GWB, OPC, RIDE) keeps track of its goals and that they are more than happy to provide an annual update to the Board.

Board Member Callahan asked how the three agencies are communicating and supporting staff in the field, including guidance counselors and work-based learning staff, to gather the data that is needed as well as help them utilize it.

The team responded that agencies meet with data directors in the field to ensure that the data is accurate and of good quality, as well as empower districts to better leverage their data by giving them better direct access to RIDE's centralized database in an easy, user-friendly way. A monthly newsletter with entries from the three agencies is also published; a 12-member community ambassador program meets monthly under the PrepareRI umbrella to talk about and share resources and best practices. OPC also manages the data-warehouse, which integrates data from the three public institutions of postsecondary education and jointly meets monthly for early college opportunities to discuss what they are doing in regards to early college opportunities and how they can help districts to ensure that students have access to those opportunities. On the workforce side, GWB manages a network of intermediaries and handles a lot of the communications with the non-profit sector as it is also an avenue outside of the schools to reach youth and parents.

Board Member DelGiudice commended the work of the three agencies and expressed that this is the type of work that the Board of Education should be hearing about and if there are any barriers, they should know that the Board stands behind them.

Board Member Grey also gave a shoutout to the team and shared that this work is also being recognized by leaders in other states. He shared that a colleague of his in Massachusetts reached out to him recently on work-based learning opportunities to see how they can integrate it into their system.

c. Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Education: 2022-2027

Board Chair Cottam conveyed that tonight's agenda marks an important moment for the Board of Education as the Pre-K to 12 and Postsecondary Strategic Plans through 2027 get unified. She noted that as a combined State Board of Education, the Board's responsibilities are set high and are made clear in statute. The Board is responsible for "developing coherent plans that meet the future needs of public education within the state in the most efficient and economical manner possible." As a State Board, we will provide vision and leadership for public education in our state; make the education of struggling learners – from Pre-K to adults – a statewide priority; set our sights on excellence; and deepen and strengthen the connection between teaching and learning in classrooms and the civic and economic future of our state. Board Chair Cottam noted that the development of the Strategic Plans – approved by their respective Councils – included extensive input from key stakeholders statewide, and the consensus found in those voices is reflected in the document. Board Chair Cottam thanked and acknowledged everyone who contributed to its development, particularly the close partnership between the two Commissioners and their Council Chairs.

Commissioner Infante-Green expressed that RIDE is excited to share the unified and seamless plan, developed in collaboration with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. She went on to share that *Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Public Education: 2022-2027* lays out a vision for an education system that offers every student the opportunity to be a lifelong learner. While the plan is informed by the events of the pandemic, it looks beyond to address the root issues that prevent students from thriving at every level of their education. RIDE wants to make the connection to higher education

early, develop individualized pathways, and support students through their postsecondary endeavors. She voiced that she recognizes that as some form of postsecondary education becomes a necessity, the role of the high school counselor is evolving, and we must evolve with it.

Commissioner Infante-Green highlighted that the plan is divided into three sections and provided an overview of the first section, which is the strategic plan for PreK-12 education. She noted that the plan reflects her vision for education and is built on the work that was underway, particularly the Rhode Island Foundation's "Chart a Course, Stay the Course" plan. The plan was developed with input from stakeholders as well as from the agency's SurveyWorks results. She shared that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously approved the plan in December 2020, and earlier this month, also approved a two-year extension to *Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success*. The plan will now serve through 2027, allowing for a more realistic timeline to achieve the outlined goals in light of the pandemic. It also helps align with the Strategic Plan of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, which lays out goals through 2027. She explained that the plan is bridged by PrepareRI 2.0, which is the action plan to prepare RI youth for success in college and career. Commissioner Infante-Green ended by expressing that this is only the beginning of the shared efforts between both systems to improve Rhode Island's education.

Next, Kirtley Fisher, RIDE's Associate Chief of Staff, presented the PK-12 Strategic Plan, which has five key priorities – Equity, Excellence in Learning, Engaged Communities, World-Class Talent, and Governance Structures, and noted that the RIDE's work is guided by these commitments and measurable goals in each of the priorities. She shared that the plan is also flexible and built to be responsive to changes or challenges that may present themselves during this time period. The Strategic Plan guided the work of the LEAP Taskforce that Commissioner Infante-Green convened to assess the conditions of learning in schools, as a result of the COVID pandemic. RIDE is also collaborating with district leaders on developing a three-year strategic plan, which is the Education Accountability Act, that also aligns to the State's Strategic Plan – going from what is being done at the State, to the district, to the school level. This is in line with shifting to a culture of support to the districts being served and having those closest to the work map out the best path to success for the students.

Next, Mr. Sherman went over the middle piece of the Strategic Plan that bridges RIDE's plan to OPC's plan and explained that the only difference between this Strategic Plan and the individual plans approved by the respective Councils, is the PrepareRI joint workforce plan, that connects the two plans. All three plans are on the exact same timeframe and common metrics.

Board Member Duffy expressed that when it comes time to vote on approval, that he is going to propose an amendment to add a corresponding measurable goal that by July 2027, 20 percent of the students achieving a level that exceeds expectations. He understands that this goal is in other areas, however, adding it to the Strategic Plan will send an important message to the public.

Commissioner Gilkey echoed Commissioner Infante-Green's comments about the great partnership between Pre-K-12 and postsecondary systems and thanked RIDE for taking the time to ensure that both systems are in sink. He shared that when he arrived in Rhode Island about a year, the Strategic Plan had expired, however, he did not want to create a plan for the sake of creating one. Commissioner Gilkey explained that the process of OPC's Strategic Plan began in the communities, which is important. He noted that his first couple of months as Commissioner, he met with all 39 local municipality leaders to establish a relationship with them. A two-page attainment profile containing lots of information on education attainment was created for each RI community that can be downloaded at RIreconnect@ri.org. An Advisory Committee was formed with individuals from various backgrounds to fully understand what Rhode Island communities need from its postsecondary system, which led to the strategic planning process. Commissioner Gilkey highlighted the priorities of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner going forward, which are reflected in the postsecondary section of the Strategic Plan and connected to the middle piece. Those priorities are based on what his office heard from community leaders, the Advisory Committee and extensive feedback from the members of the Council on Postsecondary Education, as well as the leaders of the postsecondary institutions.

5d. Update on the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

Prior to turning the presentation over to the team (Scott Gausland, RIDE's Director of Data and Technology Services; Peg Votta, RIDE's SLDS Program Manager; Dana Brandt, Interim Director of DataSpark at URI), Mr. Sherman framed the discussion by expressing that data is the nerve center and what connects all the work that was talked about this evening and that Rhode Island is the national leader in terms of the PrepareRI work and the Longitudinal Data System.

Director Gausland expressed that he is excited to talk about a system that has been around for about a decade and share the work that has been accomplished over that period. This integrated system connects individual level data from early childhood, through postsecondary education, and into the workforce, into one integrated data warehouse. He went on to share that the system is operated by DataSpark at URI and is one of the most robust and mature SLDSs in the country. A powerful tool to help policymakers make data-driven decisions, all three agencies are working on a bill to institutionalize the system in statute and create structures for its long-term sustainability and growth. Director Gausland shared that the SLDS Program was established by the Education Technical Assistance Act of 2002, to help state and territories make informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, including at the school level.

Next, Director Brandt explained that DataSpark is a program unit at URI and that for nearly 30 years, DataSpark has used the power of data to inform, empower, and inspire innovative decision making and research. The program began as a state and city partnership, but over the next two decades strengthened those partnerships, primarily at the state agency level, and pivoted from spatial analysis, to meet the demand for person level analysis. The state has received nearly \$17M in funding to build this system and is now able to link data from early childhood through workforce and other state and local agency partners.

Next, Ms. Votta shared that linking data at the individual level is a very delicate process and she thanked the attorneys who at the time made sure that this was done in the best way possible as it was a very difficult process. She went over some examples of the importance of the data that is collected from different data stories, highlighting the impact of chronic absenteeism in high school on college and post-secondary persistence, and the ability to now track what happens to those students after they drop out of college.

6. Approval of Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for Education: 2022-2027

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Michael Almeida, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education approved Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for Education: 2022-2027

Member Green proposed, seconded by Member Gaines, to amend the motion to approve Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for Education: 2022-2027, by adding to goal number one, the language that 20 percent of students will score at the highest level of proficiency.

Vote: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Dennis Duffy, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education approved Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for Education: 2022-2027, as amended.

Vote: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Chairman Cottam stated that the next meeting of the RI Board of Education is scheduled for Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Cottam called for a motion to adjourn tonight's meeting.

On a motion duly made by Timothy DelGiudice and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was

VOTED: That, the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 12 members voted in the affirmative, 0 members voted in the negative, as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.