



Enclosure 2a
June 16, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
May 12, 2020

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the May 12, 2020, virtual meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. He declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

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

[**Ex-officio, non-voting member]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the May 12, 2020, virtual meeting

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the April 21, 2020, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the April 21, 2020, Meeting

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair McConaghy reported that no one had signed-up to speak.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Infante-Green began by giving an update on Covid-19:

- Distance Learning has been extended until the end of the current school year;
- As it was done for April, there are statewide school calendars for May and June, which include professional days and one vacation day;
- All school districts will have the last day of school they had in their school calendars;
- Plans are being made for summer programming and the reopening of schools in the fall;
- A top priority remains meetings with students, educators, and families, which have been turned into virtual meetings;
- Last month, she joined Governor Raimondo in a Latino Town Hall to address how the Latino community has been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19;
- A Student led Summit was held and she was incredibly moved by students' ideas and stories;
- The community has come together to support students, especially those who had trouble accessing online learning due to lack of computer and internet access – She thanked Neil Steinberg, the President and CEO of the RI Foundation, for the Foundation's donation of \$100,000 for technology needs and issuing a technology challenge to the community to match that number, which has raised more than \$400,000 from over 70 donors. She also thanked CVS Health for donating \$150,000 to the Woonsocket Education Department for the purchase of 750 Chromebooks, and Brown University for their \$100,000 donation to the Providence Public Schools for supporting internet access for 900 students.
- The April Reading Challenge had nearly 22,000 students log their minutes from more than 300 schools across the State for more than one million reading minutes. She thanked Barnes & Noble for providing a prize package of books to four schools with the most reading minutes.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report with an update on the Providence School District's (PPSD) Turnaround Plan. She shared that the Plan, which will drive the next five years of transformation work in Providence, will be released in just a few weeks. The document called Turning Hope Into Results: A Turnaround Action Plan for the Providence Public Schools, is a thoughtful, conscientious approach to change, inspired by four core values that infuse all of the education work happening in Rhode Island – Students First, Equity and Access, Transparency, and Results. The Plan is built on the three pillars that are the core of RIDE's vision for education in Rhode Island – World-class Talent, Excellence in Learning, and Engaged Communities. Building Efficient District Systems is the foundation underneath those pillars. The Plan was developed through a deep collaboration that included RIDE, PPSD, and the broader Providence community, highlighted by the Community Design Teams – a group of 45 community members who came together to write recommendations aligned to each of the three pillars.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Highlights from Statewide Student Summit

Lauren Griffiths, Chair of the Student Advisory Council, and Robert Desilets, Senior at Hope High School and a Lead on the Commissioner's Focus Fridays Team, presented some highlights of the Statewide Student Step-Up Summit that occurred virtually on Saturday, April 25.

Mr. Desilets began by sharing that the Focus Fridays Team was established on one set core goal - Provide students a platform to have direct access to the Commissioner and express their challenges, successes and develop best practices, especially in Providence. With the challenges of Covid-19, the Team's original plan to host the Step-Up Summit for Providence students had to be reconsidered, which resulted in the decision to team up with the Student Advisory Council to create a virtual Summit and make it a virtual event for students statewide, where 63 students from 18 schools across the state participating. Mr. Desilets expressed that the main takeaway from the event is that a student's zip code should not determine the quality of education he or she receives as everyone deserves an education fit to compel students to pursue whichever career path he/she chooses.

Ms. Griffiths shared some of the feedback from students on Distance Learning – missing school, worn-out by technology, struggling with the workload, concerns with meeting graduation requirements and standardized tests, and lack of social interaction, while others seized the opportunity to try new hobbies. Students also suggested different initiatives that would help with Distance Learning – teachers offering office hours and compiling resources with weekly agendas, lessons, and review materials ahead of time, as well as anonymous surveys on how

their experience with virtual learning is going. She also expressed that the highlight of the Summit was the statewide conversation on education equity and Commissioner Infante-Green's explanation of the Johns Hopkins report on the Providence School District, which made many students emotional as they weren't previously aware of the inequities faced by many students.

Council Members commended Ms. Griffiths and Mr. Desilets for their impressive leadership and encouraged them that as they move on to college to look for other students who can take on what they have created and continue to build on the momentum and to not let the engagement and energy die. They also suggested that going forward, technology be used as a resource to get more students and teachers involved in important statewide conversations outside of their own districts, which will have a profound ripple effect.

b. Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island – 2nd read of redline version

Ana Riley, RIDE's Deputy Commissioner for Teaching and Learning, framed the conversation by sharing that this evening's version of the regulations reflects feedback from Council members at the April 22 meeting, as well as feedback from RIDE's meeting with the Certification Policy Advisory Board (CPAB).

Lisa Foehr, RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, went over the changes incorporated since the last meeting – Inter-state Flexibility Agreement – Added Delaware, which was inadvertently left out from the list of Northeast States, and deleted language - beginning May 1, 2020 – from the Fast-track Principal, Preliminary Expert Residency Certificate. RIDE also fixed some inconsistency of language in the way Early Childhood Special Educator and Elementary Special Educator, as well as Middle Grades Special Educator and Secondary Grades Special Educator sections read and are described.

c. Curriculum Update

Deputy Riley reminded Council Members that legislation passed last year requires all districts to move to high-quality curriculum in mathematics, English language arts, and science. Districts have up to three years to get to the mathematics and English language arts and until 2025 for science. RIDE has been surveying and working with districts to see which districts have high-quality curriculum and those who are going to need additional support in implementing the work.

Ms. Foehr shared that as part of the legislative mandate, earlier this year the Council reconfirmed the Rhode Island State Standards and that RIDE is currently working on developing curriculum frameworks. She went over data on how many classroom hours students spend each day on assignments that are not grade appropriate – 2/3 of instructional time in each content area spent off grade level - adoption guidance that RIDE has provided to districts; and the list of districts that RIDE has been working with in outlining their instructional vision and supporting them in the selection, launch, and implementation, of a high-quality curriculum. In addition, RIDE is working with districts on building strategies for professional learning that is curriculum focused to help teachers implement the new materials which will result in student achievement gains. RIDE released a RFP to help support districts in the first year of implementation of high-quality curriculum, and is still on track to launch the list of curriculums in June, along with guidance materials.

Council Members praised RIDE for doing some really good work in moving this along and offering to help schools, however, they shared their frustration with the timeline that districts were given to choose a curriculum as another generation of kids are not being academically challenged due to inadequate curricula.

Ms. Foehr replied that the deadline was set in legislation and that the number one barrier that she has heard from districts for not moving faster or purchasing curriculum for more than one grade span in one year, is not having the budget. RIDE did receive a \$20M Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant from the federal government, which 27 districts that have high-quality curricula, applied for and received, some level of funding, to help with the purchase of curriculum, but that is not enough.

d. School Construction Overview – Necessity of School Construction Projects

Christine Lopes-Metcalf, CEO of the School Building Authority, began by sharing how construction has been one of the industries that has continued operations during the pandemic and school construction projects such as the East Providence High School project have continued to go on over the last couple of months. RIDE's School Building Authority team has been working remotely and has created structures to move the work as fast or as slow as districts are comfortable with. Meetings have continued to occur, virtually, and all design review approvals and the processing of pay-go invoices, have shifted to electronic submission. Districts have advanced summer projects into the spring and are on track to realize significant construction savings as bids have been coming in lower than previously expected. She reminded Council members that the majority of the projects being presented this evening still require local voter approval in November before they advance further.

Dr. Joseph da Silva, RIDE's School Construction Coordinator, Architectural Design Reviewer, went over the Necessity of School Construction Projects (Burrillville, Cranston, Cumberland, Newport and Warwick) that are being recommended for Council approval, totaling approximately \$400M.

Council Members Gaines asked that in light of the current budgetary concerns across the state, if there is any chance that these funds might be in jeopardy.

Ms. Lopes-Metcalf responded that once the Council approves the projects and the districts have voter approval, the State has always met its obligation and has always been there to support, and so far, RIDE hasn't received any indication otherwise.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Approval of the Proposed Revisions to the School Health Regulations, for the Purpose of Public Review and Comment, and scheduling of public hearing

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Gara Field, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the proposed revisions to the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island, for the purpose of public review and Comment, and scheduling of public hearing.

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

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

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Approval of the Proposed Certification Tests

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 move to approve the ETS School Superintendent Assessment (6991) with a cut score of 162, the ETS Middle Grades Science (5442) with a cut score of 152, and the ETS Reading Specialist Assessment (5302) with a cut score of 165.

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. ADJOURNMENT:

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 adjourns

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.