



Enclosure 2a
December 17, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
December 3, 2019

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the December 3, 2019, 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

[*Arrived at 5:36 p.m.]

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

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the December 3, 2019, Meeting

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Field arrived after the approval of the agenda]

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the November 19, 2019, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the November 19, 2019, Meeting

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 2

[Members Gaines and McConaghy abstained from the vote as they did not attend the November 19, 2019 meeting of the Council]

[Member Field arrived after the approval of the minutes]

3. OPEN FORUM

Six individuals spoke in support of the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts (TAPA) request for charter renewal.

Four individuals spoke in support of the NELS Construction and Career Academy request for charter renewal.

Written testimony was entered into the record and is available at the Office of the Board of Education.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

In the interest of time, Commissioner Infante-Green took a minute to ask everyone in attendance to purchase a Boscov's Department Store coupon, whose proceeds will benefit Providence students, families and schools. This is a one-day promotion on Sunday, December 8th to raise funds for the district where customers make a \$5 donation to Providence schools, and who in turn will receive 25% off their purchase.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Request for Endorsement of the Standards

Lisa Foehr, Chief of RIDE's Division of Teaching and Learning, gave some context to the conversation and reminded Council Members that earlier in the fall, RIDE provided them with an overview of the legislation that passed last year, which included sections on statewide academic standards, curriculum frameworks, selection of high-quality curriculum and materials, and curriculum implementation accountability. The first benchmark outlined in the legislation is for the Council to re-endorse (not change) Rhode Island's content standards that were listed in the legislation (Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics, Next Generation Science Standards, RI Social Studies Grade Span Expectations, National Core Arts Standards, ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, and RI Early Learning and Development Standards) and to ensure that they are aligned to the RICAS testing program for at least 10 years.

Next, Dr. Phyllis Lynch, RIDE's Director of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, walked the Council through the process of the legislative criteria for academic standards review. She noted that the standards were brought to advisory groups, and in some cases, the state associations for those groups, for review, evidence, and feedback. In general, the feedback received revealed that all the standards sufficiently met the criteria, with the exception of the RI Social Studies Grade Span Expectations (SSGSEs). The committee felt that the SSGSEs, which were developed many years ago, didn't accurately reflect current research and need to more explicitly address cultural responsiveness. Stakeholders also indicated that the criteria in some of the standards were not applicable for content standards, and recommended that those issues be addressed through guidance or the curriculum frameworks. Guidance from RIDE should be provided to support implementation of the standards to address the needs of multilingual learners, differently-abled students, and students with social emotional challenges. RIDE's recommendation to the Council is continued endorsement of the current set of academic standards, including the endorsement of the SSGSEs, until new RI standards are developed, or national standards are identified.

Chair Cottam asked when RIDE would be bringing examples of high-quality curriculum materials (HQCM) in ELA, mathematics, and science, before the Council, as student academic performance will not change until systems are in place. Ms. Foehr responded that although the legislation calls for RIDE to identify at least five examples of HQCM by January 2021 and that by June 2023 all LEAs will select a high-quality curricula in ELA and mathematics and science by 2024. RIDE's working timeline is that by June 2020, the agency will have officially published an initial list for mathematics and ELA curricula. As far as the science curriculum, RIDE will move

up the science timeline by six months as the field of science is a little further behind in terms of available materials that have already been reviewed. This will give RIDE additional time to work with districts to make their purchases, phase those in, and provide support implementation.

b. Fast-track Principal Requirements – Proposed Draft

Lisa Foehr framed the conversation by reminding Council Members that the Fast-track Principal Requirements – Section 1.10.1 – Building Level Administrator Certificates, is a new section that will ultimately be embedded in the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island, which the Council reviewed and approved last fall. She emphasized that all of the eligibility requirements are what is outlined in legislation, word for word, and once this section is embedded in regulation, RIDE can begin to enact the process and individuals can apply for a professional license as a building level administrator.

Council Members raised concerns with the lack of an evaluative process as part of the successful completion of the eligibility requirements and the need to have something stronger than just meeting a 300-hour requirement. Ms. Foehr replied that much like other sections of the regulations around internships, RIDE will put out guidance to districts on how to set-up a successful internship that will set someone up for success. Council Members also expressed that there is nothing fast about this track and asked whether they are obligated to comply with this legislative requirement. Ms. Foehr replied that RIDE is obligated to enact regulation to be able to comport with the legislation, however, there can be some further discussion on adding some additional safeguards, i.e. the internship piece, that might make the Council a bit more comfortable, without negating what the legislation outlines.

Next, Ms. Foehr went over Section 1.8.15 - Fast-track Principal Expert Residency Preliminary Certificate, and shared that with this section, the Council has significantly more flexibility, depending on their comfort level. This section sets a minimum set of requirements that would have to be met upfront as a condition of issuance, and allows the person to serve as a principal of record, under the supervision of the district superintendent, while they complete the remaining requirements outlined in the legislation.

c. Necessity of School Construction Project – Pawtucket

Chair McConaghy noted for the record that he was recusing himself from the discussion as his current employer may in the future pursue work on the project.

Christine Lopes-Metcalf, RIDE's Chief Executive Officer, School Building Authority, framed the conversation by reminding the Council that after the statewide bond passed, RIDE had a number of conversations with districts about the amount of time they needed to plan, and added a second approval to the annual process – a fall approval and a spring approval. The Pawtucket School Department is the only district that opted for the fall approval, but other districts will have their requests in May. Ms. Lopes-Metcalf stressed that there is an immense amount of work that goes into the process, involving both the School Building Authority (SBA) team and district-level staff, and commended everyone's effort.

Next, Ms. Lopes-Metcalf turned the conversation over to Dr. Joseph da Silva, RIDE's School Construction Coordinator and Architectural Design Reviewer, who went over the details of Pawtucket's Necessity of School Construction Project request. Dr. da Silva emphasized that this \$234M request underwent a rigorous review over multiple years and praised the district for the master planning behind it. The request is for two new elementary schools, a property purchase for swing space, and district-wide repairs.

Council Members suggested that going forward, part of the process should be to tie the money to a requirement that upkeep of the buildings be funded by the local districts and not be the state's responsibility. They also questioned the amount being request for repairs to Shea and Tollman High Schools. Dr. da Silva responded that those two schools are in the National Register as they were built at the turn of the century, and as a result of their age, they need some TLC. The request amount is for a complete restoration of the two high schools. The district did look at new building costs and decided that this was the most prudent recommendation at this time, as building a new high school would cost in the range of \$100M. All the projects are expected to be completed over the next five years.

d. Charter Schools – Requests for Renewal

1. Academy for Career Exploration (ACE)

Before turning the presentation over to the Charter Team, Commissioner Infante-Green read RIDE's recommendation – That, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education move to renew the charter of the Academy for Career Exploration for one-year, for the term expiring with school year 2020-2021, expiring at the end of school year 2020-2021. She expressed that this recommendation was a bit difficult to make and that the letter submitted by the school in response to the recommendation, was particularly disappointing as the school did not take ownership of the issues raised.

Mr. Osborn went over the charter renewal timeline and the work that went into the recommendations. He explained that this is a 10-month process, which includes RIDE meeting with the schools to go over the process; site visits with teachers, students, parents, and families; working with the school team to compile the report, which is co-developed with the school and each piece of information signed-off by the school; and RIDE meeting with each of the schools to review the final recommendation thus giving schools the ability to provide a response.

Next, Mr. Osborn went over the conditions in ACE's recommendation, noting that the one-year recommendation is due to the school's downward trajectory of its academic performance. He shared that during the site visits, many challenges were exposed, including students not receiving coherent and individualized guidance supports in adherence with the secondary school regulations; science not being taught by a certified science teacher; lack of a standards-aligned, high quality curriculum for all grades and core subject areas; and students not knowing who their guidance counselor was.

Member Beretta expressed that having bare minimum requirements in place should not be the standard for getting a renewal, and asked if the school had notified RIDE that they were having these challenges.

Mr. Osborn responded that since this is the first time that RIDE has had to deal with a one year renewal, the approach is that rather than doing a site visit in the spring, RIDE is proposing to do another site visit in October, so that there is time for the school to implement changes and start to see some progress. The school will then come back to the Council next fall with evidence of a high-quality curriculum being in place, and clear professional development, and teaching and learning.

Next, Mr. Osborn went over the summary of the school's most recent academic performance, highlighting that the mathematics proficiency in the 2018 SAT administration was plus 8% and 0% in 2019. There has been a downward trajectory of the course of the school's academic performance since the Council renewed their charter five years ago, when 80% of the students were proficient in English. That number is currently in the 20th percentile. RIDE also has concerns with the leadership capacity being able to take ownership of systemic issues that contribute to qualitative outcomes, and there hasn't been appropriate consistent instruction for supports at the school. He emphasized that the school was authorized in 1997 as a partnership with Textron, and when it lost that partnership, it focused on culinary and hospitality, and has since transitioned to focus on IT. The school identifies itself as a four-year, comprehensive college, preparatory high school.

Council Members raised concerns with granting ACE a one-year renewal, considering that their mathematics proficiency is at zero percent and suggested that rather than telling the school that it has another year to make progress, students and families should be given a clear message that barring a miracle, the school will be closed by June 2021. They once again stressed that charter schools have to provide value to their students, and recommended ensuring that 9th graders do not enroll at the school next year by providing clear information to families on the status of the school.

Commissioner Infante-Green responded that granting the school a one-year renewal was a very difficult decision that she struggled with, and a decision that was made in the interest of families, as they don't have better choices and need the time to transition to other schools.

2. The Greene School

Paula Barney, RIDE's Charter School Coordinator, went over The Green School's recommendation, highlighting that the school is part of an expeditionary learning school model, which comes with a whole review process, goal-setting process, and support from that organization. The school is being recommended for a five-year renewal based on the school's improvement both in their overall star rating as well as in the measures of their academic success. The school is above the state average in both mathematics and English language arts, with strong growth in both subjects. She highlighted that the school has been working with RIDE to address its system for screening servicing multilingual learners as well as their financial management ratings, which the school addresses in its response letter.

Member Beretta shared that she went to visit the school and was very impressed by the focus on academics, encouragement for students to attend college, as well as the number of students from Central Falls who attend the school.

3. NELS Construction and Career Academy

Mr. Osborn went over NELS recommendation, highlighting that this is a five-year renewal with pretty significant conditions, which ensure that the school closes the non-construction pathway, and pursues an alternative accountability framework in partnership with RIDE and Cranston Public Schools. By June 1, 2020, the charter and its construction partner must execute a written agreement that ensures all students successfully completing the construction pathway, upon turning 18 and meeting all identified employment requirements, such as drug test and background check, will be prepared to be accepted into the apprenticeship program, which has an annual starting wage of \$45,000 to \$52,000 for a high school graduate. By December 31, 2020,

the construction program must meet the CTE Board Standards for Construction Technology, and by June 2021, all students completing the construction pathway must earn the recognized CTE credentials as outlined by the CTE Board Standards. Additionally, beginning for school year 2020-2021, at least 75% of NELs students must participate in the construction pathway and the World of Work pathway is closed. Annually, by November 15, NELs will report the employment and postsecondary outcomes for all graduates with the previous two years, to RIDE and the Council. Mr. Osborn noted that as part of a larger conversation, Rhode Island does not have an alternative school accountability framework, and as part of the school's upcoming term, RIDE, Cranston, and leaders of NELCCA, will work with the four alternative schools and programs in the state to develop a statewide alternative school accountability framework. That framework will not replace the charter performance framework in making renewal decisions.

Council Member Purtill expressed that this school is a perfect example of what a charter school should be as these are students, whom in many cases are at-risk, who have the opportunity to go through this program and when they leave and start working, are making \$52,000 annually, which is better than many students graduating college.

Council Member Beretta expressed that the Council should not have to wait until a school is up for renewal to get an update on how a school is performing based upon new plans and proposals, and wishes that the Council had a Charter School Subcommittee as it did in the past, that provided updates to the Council on a regular basis.

4. RISE Prep Mayoral Academy

Germain Curtis, Charter Team Member, went over RISE's recommendation, highlighting that the school is being recommended for a five-year renewal with no conditions. In 2019, the school exceeded expectations on the academic performance indicator and earned five stars in the 2019 statewide accountability system. The school has not met expectations on the charter financial performance indicator over the course of its charter term, however, the school's FY2019 audit is complete and shows the school in an improved financial position.

5. Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts (TAPA)

Mr. Osborn went over TAPA's recommendation, which is for 3-years with two significant conditions – By June 1, 2020, TAPA must submit a comprehensive plan, including interim metrics and goals, to address mathematics achievement for all grades for RIDE approval, and by December 31, 2020, the school must submit evidence of plan implementation, including documentation of interim results. Mr. Osborn noted that the school's leaders began to work on the conditions even before RIDE had the conversation with them. TAPA's academic results have been mixed over the course of this term, but last year, TAPA's SAT proficiency rates went up 15 percentage points. The school has done a thoughtful job in terms of the guidance counselor support and have dedicated a full-time alumni coordinator to support students' transitioning to,

and succeeding in, college. RIDE is excited to see the school’s focus on academic rigor, as well as the 86% positive school family climate survey results.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Preliminary Approval of the University Charter School Proposal

On a motion duly made by Gara Field and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to grant preliminary approval to University High School’s proposal for a new charter to open in school year 2020-2021; with final approval contingent on the completion of all pre-opening requirements and conditions established by the RI Department of Education.

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

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

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Callahan departed prior to the approval of Action Items]

b1. Approval of the Appeals Committee Recommendation on the matter of DCYF v. Cumberland School Committee

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Gara Field, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of DCYF v. Cumberland School Committee, the Commissioner’s Decision is affirmed, as presented.

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

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

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Callahan departed prior to the approval of Action Items]

b2. Approval of the Appeals Committee Recommendation on the matter of DCYF v. Newport School Committee

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of DCYF v. Newport School Committee, the Commissioner's Decision is affirmed, as presented.

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

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

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Callahan departed prior to the approval of Action Items]

7. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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

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

YEAS: 8

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Callahan departed at 6:35 p.m.]