



**Enclosure 2a**  
**March 8, 2022**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**February 8, 2022**

Pursuant to Executive Order 22-01, this was a hybrid meeting.

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

---

Board Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the February 8, 2022, hybrid meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Present in person:** Barbara Cottam

**Present remotely:** Michael Almeida, \*Milly Asherov, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

**Absent:** 0

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

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the February 8, 2022, meeting

**Vote:** 9 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

a. Minutes of the January 11, 2022, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Michael Almeida, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the January 11, 2022, meeting

Vote: 8 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, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 1 - Patricia DiCenso did not attend the January 11, 2022, meeting

### 3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by recognizing that January is Black History Month and a time to celebrate the many accomplishments of the Black community locally and nationally. RIDE wants to use this month as an opportunity to reflect what more can be done to create a more equitable education system that empowers young Black Rhode Islanders to make their own mark on history.

Next, in recognition of National School Counselor Week, Commissioner Infante-Green acknowledged the amazing work being done in schools by talented counselors, who are the backbone of our schools every day. School Counselors stepped-up and helped our students through a tremendously difficult time, and RIDE is on track to making once-in-a-generation investments, including improving the student-to-counselor ratio. She shared that yesterday she joined a group of counselors at a professional development session and was inspired by the amazing work they are doing. She then introduced Kristi Lombardo, President-Elect, RI School Counselors Association (RISCA) and School Counselor at the Harry Kazarian Elementary School in Providence, and Onna Holland, School Counselor, at the Ricci Middle School in North Providence and Secretary of RISCA. She then presented them with a signed proclamation by Governor McKee officially declaring this week National School Counselor Week in Rhode Island and invited them to say a few words.

Ms. Lombardo began by expressing that Elementary School Counselors set the foundation, knowledge, attitude, and skills for all students to become competent and confident learners. Through the comprehensive work, the Elementary School Counselors work as a collaborative team with school staff, parents, and the entire community, to create a caring climate and atmosphere, by providing education prevention, early identification, and interventions. School Counselors help all students achieve academic success and reach their full potential.

Next, Ms. Holland shared that she was a School Counseling Fellow at RIDE for three years before going back to North Providence, and is really excited to be coming back to the department to continue this important work. In honor of National School Counseling Week, she shared some of the highlights of what has been accomplished over the past few years.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green highlighted some developments that are part of the evening's agenda - new nominees to the Vision Education Services Advisory Board; the latest draft of the proposed changes to the secondary education regulations, for the purpose of public review and comment; changes to the PK-12 Education Strategic Plan to reflect the impact of the pandemic; and an important update from Providence Acting Superintendent Javier Montañez and his team on the district's services for multilingual learners.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report by congratulating Victor Capellan, her Senior Advisor, for being recognized by Leadership Rhode Island as one of Rhode Island's outstanding leaders. He has been named a 2022 "Thread of Leadership" honoree for his work to improve our state.

#### **4. OPEN FORUM**

Forty-five individuals addressed the Council.

Three written comments were submitted and shared with Council members and are on file at RIDE.

#### **5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **a. Providence Update**

Javier Montañez, Acting Superintendent, provided an update on the work that the Providence Public School District (PPSD) has been doing to better serve the district's multilingual learners (MLLs). He shared that his academic journey began as a MLL and with the support of many individuals along the way, he was able to work hard and doors were open to him to eventually serve as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and now acting superintendent. From personal experience and through his interaction with students over the years, he knows that multilingualism is a strength, not a weakness. Unfortunately, PPSD has failed MLLs for generations, but he is fully committed to rectifying the historic wrongs and understands doing so requires comprehensive systemic change at the district level, change that has been implemented since the State intervention began. He recognizes that additional work needs to be done, and while the Department of Justice (DOJ) acknowledges the remarkable progress that happened last year, the agreement continues, and the district is working with urgency to meet the aggressive goal of the MLLs. The DOJ found that the district was not able to provide for all MLLs with adequate instruction from teachers who were fully certified or on track to fulfill the required professional development or in-class support hours. He shared that this school year, PPSD announced multilingual support incentives for new and existing teachers that include an increase in ESL reimbursement for up to \$8,000 for existing and new cohort members, a \$2,500 incentive for Special Education teachers pursuing an ESL certification, and a \$2,500 incentive for teachers

pursuing dual language certification. This is in addition and up to a \$10,000 sign-on bonus for hires in hard to fill areas, including dual language, bilingual and ESL. The district has also applied to RIDE to become the first district to offer in-house ESL certification.

Next, Jennifer Efflandt, Executive Director of MLLs, and a former MLL in Providence, presented the district's vision for MLLs; current number of MLLs receiving English language development (ELD) services compared to the 2018-2019 school year; progress towards integrated program models; integrated elementary classrooms; bilingual/DL program expansion; percentage of teachers holding and using their ESL/BDL certification; district actions to support teacher ESL certification; MLL professional development; MLL coaching; supports for communicating with MLL families; snapshot of recent RICAS data; and future work that the district is focusing on.

Member Callahan expressed that there is a law directing districts to provide professional development at the school level or in-district and asked where PPSD is in terms of the professional development that is being provided, the number of teachers who need either an endorsement or certification, and the timeline for teachers getting their professional development completed.

Ms. Efflandt replied that the 40 sessions that focus on sheltered content instruction are happening across every single school in the district where coaches are trained and who can then lead those professional development sessions at those schools. Regarding the law, PPSD wants all its teachers to be aware of all the program options that they have, and when possible, they can take some of this coursework within the schools. Furthermore, PPSD has partnered with the higher education organizations and lead information sessions every two weeks, and when possible, cohorts are created where teachers are able to take courses at their own school building. As far as the timeline, over 2,000 teachers (27% of the entire workforce) have an ESL or bilingual/dual language certification and the district's goal is to get to 52% by the 2024-2025 school year. The district is working with human resources and the higher education organizations to ensure that hundreds of teachers can get accepted to these programs and become certified. Every year there are at least 150 teachers who are actively pursuing getting their certification with those higher education organizations.

Commissioner Infante-Green clarified that there are two different conservations happening simultaneously - workshops and courses. She added that there is no law about that, but there is certification in terms of teachers getting certified. There are the workshops that the DOJ mandated that the district needs to do because they did not take place over the last 20 years.

Ms. Efflandt added that those professional development sessions don't lead to certification, they are just trainings for teachers to make sure that they can vet strategies in their instruction to support MLLs.

Commissioner Infante-Green restated that there is no law and that it's the DOJ agreement that stipulates that teachers who are in front of students have to be certified. There is a certification requirement as well as a professional development requirement, and the district must do both.

Member Callahan expressed that she recollects a law requiring the provision of classes leading towards certification. She wants to ensure that the letter of the law is being met and that those opportunities are available to people to meet the district's deadline or even surpass it.

Board Chair Cottam directed attention to the data snapshot slide showing students who have gone through the ELL programs are doing very well and have better scores overall in each category than the English learners.

Ms. Efflandt replied that this trend is not unique to Rhode Island because when you look at national data that compare students who exited ELL programs, they do outperform their monolingual peers.

#### b. Regulations for School Health Programs in Rhode Island

David Sienko, RIDE's Director of the Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports, introduced Rosemary Reilly-Chammat, RIDE's School Health Specialist; and staff from the RI Department of Health (DOH) - Michael Dexter, Chief of Health Systems and Policy and Regulations; Lauren Gareau, Rules and Regulations Coordinator; Sounivone Phanthavong, Program Administrator for School, Adolescent and Reproductive Health, who were on hand to answer questions.

Ms. Reilly-Chammat began by going over the authority that RIDE has with RIDOH to promulgate the School Health Regulations. She shared that both agencies work together to incorporate new statutes pertaining to school health and align regulations with complementary legislation, regulations and best practices. The Council approved the draft regulations in February 2020, enabling RIDOH to begin the public hearing process, which ended in December 2021. She explained that as a result of the public hearing process, two changes happened - the phrase "or otherwise discriminate against," which is coupled with the child won't be disciplined or otherwise discriminated against if they hold a medical marijuana card as well as requiring schools to make arrangements for another school nurse or school employee to administer medical marijuana, in the event the original school nurse declines to administer it.

#### c. Recommendation of new members to the RIVESP Advisory Board

Dr. Kelvin Roldán, Deputy Commissioner for Transformation, reminded Council members that today's nominees complete the set of recommendations that they approved last November. Deputy Roldán shared that the Commissioner has prioritized parents of visually impaired students across the state as well as teachers who are serving those students to serve on the Board. The three nominees (Jamie Partridge, Danielle Petsch, and Sarah Shaffer) are very excited to begin to serve.

Member Purtill asked if there is a student representative on the Board.

Deputy Roldán responded that the way the statute is written, it is very specific, and the Commissioner must follow that process when appointing members, however, there are former students and recent graduates of the program.

d. Proposed revisions to the Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success  
- 2021-2025 Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education

Kirtley Fisher, RIDE's Associate Chief of Staff, explained that the Council is being asked to approve an update to the current plan, which was approved back in December 2020. Since that approval, RIDE has been working with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to combine the strategic plans. She explained that there are two reasons to extend the current strategic plan to 2027 - to align with the postsecondary strategic plan, which goes through 2027, as well as the need to extend the measurable goals and assess the data from the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that those goals are met.

Next, Sherman Spencer, RIDE's Chief for Innovation, explained that at the upcoming meeting of the full Board of Education, there will be a presentation on the overlap work between RIDE, OPC and the Department of Labor and Training, under the PrepareRI platform, and the many other initiatives that need to be done jointly to accomplish those goals.

e. RIDE's Executive Pay Plans and Salary Ranges

Victor Capellan, Special Advisor to the Commissioner, and Margaret Santiago, Director of Human Resources, presented the changes to the agency's executive pay plans and salary ranges. Mr. Capellan explained that the proposed plan will cover fiscal years 2021-2024 and contains sequential salary range increases of 2.5 percent per year. The changes are commensurate with the increases and the agreement with the Department of Administration (DOA) and the unions representing state employees who fall under Council 94 per the state master agreement. This proposal is consistent with past practices of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and is being coordinated with DOA. RIDE is in negotiations with its 20212 Union, therefore, the proposed update to the executive pay plan will apply over the course of the next four years for non-union, non-classified staff at the agency.

Member Callahan voiced that she was looking for additional backup that she does not see. When she looks at the list of executive positions or categories, it is difficult to see how many positions are in each category, and how it compares to lists from past years. She also asked to see a comparison in terms of the number of executive positions that are represented on this year's list compared to lists from previous years, to get some sense of the changes. She is concerned about approving something of this significance without some necessary background information that would give her a better feel for what it represents, and asked for an organizational chart.

Mr. Capellan replied that none of the titles in this year's list are different than what was presented and approved by the Council in 2019. The organizational chart will come to the Council at a later date as the Commissioner is looking at reorganizing the agency.

Director Santiago reiterated that these are the same exempt positions that were identified in the organizational chart and executive pay plan that the Council approved in December 2019. She then went over the current number of positions on each listed category.

Commissioner Infante-Green also reiterated that there have been no changes to the list that the Council approved in 2019.

Member Almeida asked for a brief explanation on what criteria is used to determine where an employee falls within a range, including new hires.

Director Santiago responded that the ranges have been in place before she was hired, 15 years ago. RIDE has submitted an RFP to DOA to conduct a compensation evaluation study that will include both non-union and Local 2012 employees to find out where in the range an employee might fall under.

Mr. Capellan further explained that when a new hire comes in, Human Resources looks at the person's qualifications, experience, content area of expertise, and track record, and figures out where that person might fall in the range to ensure that there is a balance with existing staff that have been at the agency for a few years.

Member Beretta expressed that she is hopeful that the pay study that RIDE will be conducting will compare how much the private sector is paying for similar positions.

Member Purtill asked if the organizational chart will be brought to the Council in the near future and if there is a time frame for the compensation evaluation to be conducted.

Director Santiago replied that RIDE is waiting for DOA to put the RFP out for public bid and the hope is to have it completed by the end of the current fiscal year.

Member Gaines expressed that she understands that it is a moving target, but that it would be helpful if RIDE added the number of employees next to each position/category.

Member Callahan asked if there is a date forthcoming for negotiations with the Local 2012 union.

Director Santiago replied that the department is currently in negotiations with Local 2012.

Anthony Cottone, RIDE's Chief Legal Counsel, emphasized that the department is waiting for a reply from Local 2012 to start bargaining with them.

- f. Proposed revisions to the Secondary Regulations, for the purpose of public review and comment

Stephen Osborn, State Strategy and Student Opportunity Officer, gave an overview on the feedback RIDE has received since the last update to the Council in December. He explained that the goal of today's presentation is to have the Council approve the proposed changes for the purpose of public review and comment, with springtime earmarked for final review and approval. He shared that in addition to the one-off conversations, RIDE has also presented the proposed recommendations to a wide range of stakeholders. Initial feedback has been that the initial timeline to phase in the regulations with the Class of 2026 is too ambitious; significant concerns about the proposed world language requirement; and schools are concerned about the potential lack of flexibility stemming from more defined graduation requirements. RIDE has updated the redlined proposal so that the new regulations will take affect with the Class of 2027 and that change has been consistently communicated with stakeholders since last December. Schools are also concerned about the potential lack of flexibility stemming from more defined graduation requirements. Mr. Osborn explained that there are no changes in terms of additional credits, but that they are more specific.

Next, Olivia Smith, Executive Associate, went over the proposed world language requirement, which has garnered the most feedback. She explained that the proposed requirement is for students to take two years of the same world language in order to graduate in an effort to align the high school coursework requirements to the college admissions requirements. The feedback ranges from folks being fully supportive of the potential requirement, to folks who have other operational concerns. Ms. Smith went over the list of schools where students are most likely (more affluent communities) and where students are less likely to receive access to world language coursework (less affluent communities), and why it matters when they apply to college.

Mr. Purtill expressed that he is concerned with going from the current 6 courses (world languages, the arts, technology, physical education, and health), down to 3 courses, as he is worried that some of them will get cut, and sports and the arts are very important to some students.

Member Beretta expressed her concern with the world language requirement for students in CTE programs.

Mr. Osborn replied that the proposal is to require world languages for all students, but that he would love to pursue what Massachusetts has in place, which is to not have CTE students take two years of world languages. The state colleges in Massachusetts allow students to attend the UMASS schools if they are in a Department of Education approved CTE program without taking two years of a world language, which right now is not an option to students in Rhode Island.

Chair Cottam voiced that this could be one of the areas that RIDE can work with OPC on.

Member Callahan expressed that although she agrees with many of the proposed changes, she is concerned by how much the bucket can hold, particularly the arts. She also suggested that after the public feedback, Council members get an opportunity to sit down with RIDE staff and talk through the public feedback on the proposed changes.



Member Davis asked if RIDE can share with the Council what the requirements are for teachers who are interested in becoming proficient to teach world languages.

Mr. Osborn replied that RIDE will be happy to share what the process is for teachers to get the world language certification.

Mr. Osborn ended the presentation by going over whether students are ready for college success as college ready rates vary for different student subgroups; action plan to support the implementation of the regulations; the flexibility needed to lead to academic readiness for all kids; the three proposed changes based-off the initial stakeholder feedback; and the process for adopting the graduation requirements.

**6. ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. Approval of the final revisions to the Regulations for School Health Programs in Rhode Island

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Regulations for School Health Programs in Rhode Island

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Michael Almeida, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. Approval of the recommended new members to the RI Vision Education Services Program (RIVESP) Advisory Board

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, approves the appointment of the three recommended members for the Advisory Board for the Rhode Island Vision Education Services Program (RIVESP) Advisory Board, as presented

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Michael Almeida, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

c. Approval of the Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success – 2021-2027 Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education

On a motion duly made by Patricia DiCenso and seconded by Michael Almeida, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Together Through Opportunity: Pathways to Student Success, Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education for 2021-2027, as presented

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Michael Almeida, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

d. Approval of RIDE's Executive Pay Plans and Salary Ranges

On a motion duly made by Michael Almeida and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves RIDE's Executive Pay Plans and Salary Ranges, as presented

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative, 2 members voted in the negative, and 0 members abstained as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: 2 – Colleen Callahan and Lawrence Purtill

ABSTAINS: 0

- e. Approval of the proposed revisions to the Secondary Regulations, for the purpose of public review and comment

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the proposed revisions to the Secondary Regulations, for the purpose of public review and comment

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

**YEAS:** Amy Beretta, Michael Almeida, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

## **7. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

**VOTED:** That the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Adjourns

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

**YEAS:** Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.