



Enclosure 2a
September 15, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
August 18, 2020

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the August 18, 2020, Hybrid meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. He noted for the record that he and members Beretta, Callahan, Cottam, Davis, Purtill, and student representative, Brandon Feliz, were attending in person, while members Gaines, Field and Martinez, were joining via the Zoom Webinar platform. He declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Present in Person: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, **Brandon Feliz, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

Via Zoom Webinar: Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines and Marta Martinez

Absent: 0

[**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 August 18, 2020, hybrid 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 July 21, 2020, Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the July 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

Three individuals who signed-up in advance to address the Council, shared their concerns with the State's plans for the reopening of schools in September.

Written testimony addressed to Council members in advance of the meeting is available at the Office of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

4. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by sharing that at a press conference earlier today, it was announced that Mayor Paolino has donated the former St. Joseph Hospital to the City of Providence. The plan is to have a PK-8 school in the south side of the city, the first of its kind in Providence. She thanked the Mayor, City Council and other city leaders for pressing on with their plans to invest in Providence's schools.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green reported that RIDE continues to commit to helping RI schools and districts strengthen their professional learning systems and practices, at no cost, throughout the week of August 24-28, 2020. The synchronous and asynchronous offerings being provided around health, safety, wellness, and instruction, will enhance opportunities for educators, administrators, and staff alike. RIDE is also working with providers to determine if synchronous offerings, and/or new options can be repeated during the week of August 31 - September 4, now that schools are starting at a later date.

Commissioner Infante-Green also shared that RIDE is in the process of updating the current five-year strategic plan for education – 2020 Vision for Education: Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for PK-12 & Adult Education, 2015-2020. She explained that the revised plan will be results oriented and will reinforce the vision and priorities for education in the State over the next several years. RIDE is working to integrate the state’s vision for education, with a focus on world-class talent, excellence in learning, and engaged communities, with the Long-term Education Planning Committee’s “Chart a Course, Stay the Course – RI’s Path to a World Class Public Education System,” which the Council endorsed earlier this year. The plan will also be structured based on a framework that aligns RIDE’s day-to-day work with its broad mission and vision. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback before the Council approves the final plan and advances it to the full Board of Education for review and full adoption.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report by sharing that RIDE has received hundreds of emails from parents, teachers and students expressing their concerns with both in-person and distance learning. She stated that not every parent has options and the luxury of staying home if schools decide to only offer distance-learning. The state has the responsibility to educate everyone and it is very important that all voices are heard and that parents are given the option to choose what works best for them.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Reopening of Schools – Update

At this time, Ana Riley, Deputy Commissioner for Instructional Programs, gave an update on the reopening of schools and began by sharing the updated unified 2020-2021 Rhode Island public school calendar. She explained that the opening of schools has been moved from August 31 for students, to September 14, however, teachers will begin on September 9, 10 and 11 in professional development, and the last day of school will now be June 25, 2021. Vacations have stayed the same and there will be no snow days as those will happen virtually. Although not a requirement, RIDE is encouraging private schools to follow the statewide calendar.

Next, Deputy Commissioner Riley went over the five metrics for school reopening readiness and what it means to be ready. She shared that this week PPE from the State will be delivered to all school districts. RIDE as well as external partners will continue to support professional learning focused on health, wellness and community engagement, in instructional core and distance learning throughout the year. She went over the school reopening readiness list since the last Council meeting and critical milestones for August 2020.

Council Members asked if anything had been done since the last Council meeting around air quality in the schools, whether a report will be released once state inspections are done, if districts will be asking parents to administer the health screening protocols, as well as clarity on how districts will be delivering distance learning and meeting the requirement of fire drills.

Commissioner Infante-Green replied that RIDE has been working with some experts, and that along with the RIDOH and other departments, will soon release guidance that will outline the benchmarks to ensure facility readiness. Once inspections have been performed, a report will be shared publicly. As far as student screening, Deputy Commissioner Riley responded that although the method will differ from district to district, every staff person will be asked to do a daily health self-attestation and parents will be asked to do one on their children. As far as distance learning, RIDE has set-aside CARES Act funds to acquire high-quality vendors to provide virtual learning instruction for students who cannot attend school for medical reasons and who qualify for a medical exemption, and for those districts who only have a handful of students who choose distance learning. There will be district-based programs, district vendor provided programs, and a statewide program that may cross districts, which must meet state standards.

b. Readiness Course Supported Through SAIL (Summer Academy for Interactive Learning) – Status Update

Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Innovation, provided an update on the State's commitment this summer to provide learning opportunities to students to experience creativity, exploration, learning, and friendship, during the pandemic. Through these opportunities, RIDE sought to offer both in-person programming and distance learning for Rhode Island students enrolled in grades PK-12, prioritizing students in Providence, Pawtucket, Central Fall, and Woonsocket, starting on June 29. RIDE received \$7.5M from CARES Act to help offset the increased costs with safely running in-person summer programming for Rhode Island students. Program providers had to submit proposals based on a set of criteria, and all proposals were evaluated by RIDE and Department of Human Services staff. One-hundred and twenty-two (122) programming opportunities were approved across the State, from 70 different providers, with 16,507 children participating, ranging from PK to grade 12.

Next, Wendy Wallace, RIDE's PrepareRI Fellow, shared that in addition to the \$7.5M CARES Act funds, RIDE received an additional \$9M to support distance learning opportunities for Rhode Island students. The goal of SAIL with PrepareRI was to provide students with access to a range of academic and enrichment learning opportunities. SAIL leveraged the already very successful Rhode Island Advanced Course Network (ACN). Programs qualified to participate in SAIL based on opportunities, had to be open to qualified students statewide, and opportunities had to align to one of six priority areas for summer learning – increasing academic achievement, work-

based learning, enrichment, physical fitness, supporting transitioning students, and supporting MLL and differently abled students. Providers were afforded the flexibility to design programs that maximized participation. SAIL funded 75 providers with 430 virtual learning opportunities offered – 6,834 learning opportunities taken (2,117 in readiness courses, 4,717 in other courses), ranging from SAT prep to art and design challenges, theater and STEM kits, mental health, racial justice, etc. More than 4,000 unique students were served, with 30 percent of students from urban core districts.

Elizabeth Texeira, RIDE’s Secondary Reform Education Specialist, explained that the RIDE team significantly expanded the PrepareRI College Readiness Project courses under SAIL. As she shared at the May meeting of the Board of Education earlier in the year, in collaboration with the three public postsecondary institutions, it launched a pilot with six high schools and 230 students designed with Carnegie WestEd, a nationally renowned curriculum provider, to ensure graduating seniors are prepared to take credit-bearing coursework in college. Unfortunately, that pilot was interrupted due to COVID-19, but luckily, RIDE was able to expand the pilot over the summer through SAIL, increasing it from one course to three new courses. Enrollment was offered to any public school student in the State (over 2,000 students signed-up and over 1,600 completed the course, taught by 71 RI teachers), providing students with a stipend (\$750 for rising seniors in college level courses and \$250 for rising freshmen), as a way to ensure they stayed focused and caught-up academically this summer. As far as COVID-19 cases, two students and two staff members in the in-person courses in stable groups of 15, tested positive. Students who participated in the program will be followed to see what impact the program may have on their learning in the subsequent year.

c. Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant – Update

Spencer Sherman, RIDE’s Director of Innovation, shared that in July, Rhode Island was one of 11 states, out of 39 states that applied, to be awarded a \$10.9M federal grant as part of the CARES package to improve education outcomes for students. This fall, RIDE will use the funding to expand on successful programs - increase and expand the Advanced Course Network; expand College Readiness Project courses in mathematics and ELA; add high-quality instructional materials in core subject areas; provide professional learning for teachers; embed more school counselors that serve communities with high levels of poverty; help build a user-friendly online platform; and hire part-time parent and student ambassadors to help spread the word in their communities - to better serve students not only during the pandemic, but in the coming years.

d. Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island

Lisa Foehr, RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, shared a summary of the feedback from the 30-day public review and comment period on the five areas of proposed modifications – Inter-State Flexibility Agreement; Special Education Certificate(s); All Grades Special Education Deaf and Hard of Hearing Certificates; All Grades English as a Second Language Education Certificate; and Fast-Track Principal: Full Certificate Requirements. She noted that the two Deaf and Hard of Hearing Certificates received the largest number of comments, and although the overall comments were supportive, concerns were expressed in two areas (Oral/Aural Certificate). RIDE had proposed nine credits for that certificate, but is now recommending adjusting it from nine to three credits in American Sign-language (ASL), and adding completion of three credits in aural/auditory communication and learning to ASL Deaf and Hard of Hearing certification requirements.

6. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of the Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island

On a motion dully made by Amy Beretta and Seconded by Karen Davis, 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

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative and 1 member abstained as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: Gara Field (could not hear the discussion as well as she would have liked to)

- b. Approval of the Appeals Committee Recommendation on the matter of Nicholas Barrow v. R.I. Department of Education and Anthony Cottone, Esq., in his official capacity

On a motion dully made by Amy Beretta and Seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That in the matter of Nicholas Barrow v. the Rhode Island Department of Education and Anthony Cottone, Esq., in his official capacity, Mr. Barrow’s Appeal is Denied and Dismissed, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative, 0 members voted in the negative and 0 members abstained 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 Karen Davis, it was

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.