



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
October 22, 2019

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. He noted for the record that Members Callahan, Field, and Gaines would not be joining the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Present: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, *Lauren Griffiths, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and **Lawrence Purtill

Absent: Colleen Callahan
Gara Field
Jo Eva Gaines

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]
[Arrived at 5:37 p.m.]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the October 22, 2019, Meeting

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, and Daniel McConaghy

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Purtill arrived after the approval of the agenda]

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the October 1, 2019, Meeting

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the October 1, 2019, Meeting

Vote: 3 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 2

[Chair McConaghy and Member Davis abstained from the vote as they did not attend the October 1, 2019 meeting of the Council]

[Member Purtill arrived after the approval of the minutes]

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair McConaghy noted for the record that no one had signed-up to speak during the Open Forum.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by sharing that October is Latino Heritage month and encouraged everyone to think about how that is reflected in the reading choices to children throughout the year. She stressed the importance of exposing all children to the past contributions that the Latino community has made and continues to make and understanding the Latino culture. She encouraged everyone to celebrate and attend the “La Feria del Libro y las Artes de Providence,” a bilingual Spanish/English book and arts festival on Saturday, November 9th, presented by the Providence Community Library and Providence College.

Commissioner Infante-Green also emphasized that October is Dyslexia Awareness month. She shared that based on the most recent RICAS administration, only 39% of Rhode Island students in grades 3-8 are meeting expectations in English Language Arts (ELA). While there is a focus on high quality curriculum and professional learning, we need to continue this focus to improve instruction and ultimately the number of students reading on grade level. She shared that this

month RIDE has been sharing resources through Twitter to increase awareness and understanding of Dyslexia and at the end of the month, it will announce the Literacy Ambassadors, who will work with RIDE to develop resources and supports around literacy instruction and Dyslexia. In November, RIDE will update the Council on the agency's plans and progress to address the Dyslexia Bill, which passed in the last legislative session.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green gave an update on the status of the Providence Public School District. She shared that last week her final Order of Control and Reconstitution was released, which is the last step in the required legal process that the Council authorized her to do. She thanked the Council for their support and leadership leading up to the state intervention to begin on November 1, 2019. She emphasized that her goal is to avoid any sudden disruption or distraction from the important work of teaching and learning and stressed that although change is going to take time, in order for that change to be successful and sustainable, it must be designed in partnership with educators, students, and the community. She noted that she is still having conversations in order to identify a Turnaround Superintendent and will continue to keep the Council updated on that front. In the meantime, she will be putting together a Design Team, a more formalized structure that involves educators, students, families, and the community at large, who will be charged with writing the Turnaround Plan.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report with an update on Times2 STEM Academy and shared that she and the RIDE team visited the school last week to check in on the school's progress in addressing the conditions outlined in their charter renewal. She stated that she left the visit feeling relieved and invigorated that the school is moving in the right direction. She then asked Nick Figueroa, the school's new Board Chair, to join the table and provide an update on the changes and action steps he and his Board have taken since he became Chair in June.

Mr. Figueroa shared that in order to help point the school back in the right direction, the school's entire leadership team has been replaced and they are currently searching for a new Executive Director. Also, of the nine current Board members, only two remain from the previous Board. In addition, the school shut down the Times2 Institute component part of the school, in order for the school to be able to focus resources in academics as opposed to going out and try to sell curriculum to other institutions. He highlighted that the message to the community is that the school is in reset mode and that the goal is to improve communications and repair the relationships with the school community and families.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Recommendation of New Chair and New Members to the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School Board of Trustees

Commissioner Infante-Green noted that today she brings before the Council five nominations (a Chair - Paul Ouellette, and four new members - Nora Crowley, Kelly Doern, Megan Herne, and Douglas Sherman) to fill current vacancies on the Davies Career and Technical High School Board of Trustees. RIDE interviewed all of the candidates on their background, qualifications, and goals, and she is confident that they possess the experience and commitment to advance the goals of the school.

- b. Recommendation of New Chair and New Member to the Central Falls Board of Trustees

Commissioner Infante-Green noted that she is recommending Stephanie Gonzalez as the new Chair and Bryant Estrada as a new Board member to the Central Falls Board of Trustees. She interviewed both candidates and is confident that they possess the experience and commitment to advance the goals and mission of the school.

Commissioner Infante-Green also acknowledged and thanked Anna Cano-Morales for her 14 years of service and dedication to the children of Central Falls as the former Chair of the Central Falls Board of Trustees.

- c. Update on the 2019 State Assessment Results

Commissioner Infante-Green framed the discussion by emphasizing that since her arrival, she has noticed that as a State, we do not do a good job looking at data and the implications for instruction. She stressed that although there are some gains, we should be cautious to make assumptions that what we are seeing are gains and not what is typically expected in the second year of the administration of a new assessment.

Next, Lisa Foehr, RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Phyllis Lynch, RIDE's Director of Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment, and Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Innovation, walked the Council through the 2019 RICAS results, the English Language Proficiency Assessment, the Alternate Assessment, as well as an overview of the PSAT/SAT results.

Ms. Foehr stressed that by adopting the MACS assessment, Rhode Island now has an apples-to-apples comparison with its neighboring state, a national leader in education. Now that Rhode Island has high standards, high expectations, and the right assessment in place, we must stay the course and focus on the things we know make a difference for teaching and learning – high quality curriculum and professional learning.

Ms. Foehr went over Rhode Island's student performance for years 2015-2017 (PARCC) and 2018-2019 (RICAS) for grades 3-8 and the percentage of students who are meeting or exceeding expectations. Although there are signs that things are moving in the right direction, including moving students out of the bottom category, there is still a long way to go as equity gaps persist for many of the subgroups, particularly for Multilanguage Learners and Differently Abled Students, who often perform in single digits.

Chair Cottam shared her concern with expecting to see an increase in text scores next year if there isn't any new curriculum changes or any new opportunities for professional development.

Ms. Foehr responded that on the positive side, coming out of last year into this year, RIDE has started to see some movement on the implementation and support side with some districts adopting new curriculum. There is also added focus and emphasis on what is happening to impress upon the districts that they need to pay attention to their data and understand what is happening at the student level. Districts need to be looking deeply into their instructional practices and curriculum and programing, to understand that is working and what is not.

Commissioner Infante-Green expressed that although it will take a minimum of three to five years to see some actual gains, steady improvement should start to occur year over year. She voiced that more attention needs to be paid to data, which should inform instructional practices. She shared that in many districts the budget drives what happens in the classroom instead of the needs of the classroom driving the budget.

Council members discussed the crises facing education today– lack of professional development, inadequate curriculum, turnover of school superintendents, administrator and teacher shortages, lack of support, etc. - and how to remove some of the barriers that currently exist, in order for positive changes to occur moving forward.

Mr. Osborn went over the PSAT/SAT year over year data emphasizing the disparities between students of different groups and backgrounds. Mr. Osborn also shared data on the top five high schools in the state and noted that despite relative success, dozens of students at the highest performing schools are not demonstrating readiness.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Approval of Recommendation of New Chair and New Members to the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School Board of Trustees

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the recommendation of Paul Ouellette as Chair and Nora Crowley, Kelly Doern, Megan Herne, and Douglas Sherman as Members of the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School Board of Trustees, as presented.

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. Approval of Recommendation of New Chair and New Members to the Central Falls Board of Trustees

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karen Davis, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved the recommendation of Stephanie Gonzalez as Chair and Bryant Estrada as a Member of the Central Falls Board of Trustees, as presented.

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

c. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2020 Revised Budget and Fiscal Year 2021 Current Service Level Budget Submissions

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves and transmits the Fiscal Year 2020 Revised and the Fiscal Year 2021 Current Service Level Budgets to the RI State Budget Office, and further approves their transmission to the Rhode Island Board of Education for final approval.

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns.

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

Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0