



**Enclosure 2a**  
**December 8, 2020**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**November 17, 2020**

Pursuant to Governor Raimondo’s Executive Order 20-75, this was a hybrid meeting.

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

---

Board Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the November 17, 2020, Hybrid meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. She noted for the record that she and Student Representative Feliz, were attending in person, while members Beretta, Callahan, Davis, Gaines, Martinez, and Purtill, were joining via the Zoom Webinar platform. She also noted that Member Field would not be joining the meeting. She declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**Participating in Person:** Barbara Cottam and \*Brandon Feliz

**Remote Participation:** Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

**Absent:** Gara Field

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

Public access was provided to attendees of this Zoom webinar in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the provisions of the Executive Order; contact information was provided for those experiencing technical difficulties.

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Karen Davis and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the November 17, 2020, hybrid meeting

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

**YEAS:** Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

[Member Beretta joined the meeting after the acceptance of the agenda]

## 2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

### a. Minutes of the October 20, 2020, Meeting

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

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the October 20, 2020, Hybrid Meeting

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Member Beretta joined the meeting after the approval of the minutes]

## 3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green thanked everyone for attending the meeting and recognized RIDE staff for their hard work on both the strategic plan and district accountability being presented this evening. She went on to say that RIDE is committed to putting into practice the frameworks and resources necessary to support the LEAs by building plans to bring the shared vision to reality. Unlike previous plans, this strategic plan is driven at its very core by the Department's mission, vision and values, provides a clear framework and outcomes that fosters partnership, values diversity, increases transparency, is results-driven, and above all, puts students first. By shifting to this model, we are enabling and encouraging our teams, districts and leaders, to have the agility and support they need to improve outcomes statewide. It also empowers those closest to the work to map out the best path to success by aligning districts and stakeholders towards common goals.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green shifted to Providence and shared that RIDE has approached that work with the same mentality as it has laid out significant groundwork despite the odds to reimagine and reinventing the district's schools – giving teachers the tools, professional development, and the needed support; ensuring students have the curricula, learning environments, and academic rigor they deserve; building a public school system that prepares all

children, not just some, for the jobs of the future; and listening to the community and responding to its needs. She stressed that we have a moral imperative to always strive for excellence and equity, and to do that, we must change the status quo, for good. RIDE is holding engagement sessions for the community in the coming weeks on the past year's work, and will be releasing a report on the turnaround efforts. She acknowledged that teachers, who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic deserve to be well-supported, and that students and staff across the state deserve to learn and work in safe, modern, and professional environments.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green announced that over the next couple of weeks the State will be piloting testing processes called "surveillance testing" in the Central Falls, Lincoln and Providence school districts. These tests will be available to teachers, staff, students, and families, on a voluntary basis. She stressed that data continues to indicate that schools are the safest places for students credited to the safety measures that are in place.

Commissioner Infante-Green ended her report by sharing that at the December 8 meeting of the Council, the School Building Authority (SBA), will be presenting three necessity of school construction recommendations (Central Falls, Exeter-West Greenwich and Narragansett) for the Council's consideration. She noted that improving school infrastructure continues to be an important aspect of RIDE's work with the goal of ensuring that students have the learning environments they need to succeed.

Member Gaines expressed that she appreciated RIDE's feedback on the questions that came up at the last Council meeting, however, she wondered if the people who raised the concerns also had access to the same feedback.

Commissioner Infante-Green replied that the information can be made public.

Member Callahan asked the Commissioner to clarify what she meant when she said that the number of positive cases in remote learning is higher than in-person learning. She also asked for the number of teachers who are quarantined as a result of positive cases as it has a significant impact on the quality of instruction.

Commissioner Infante-Green replied that she meant percentages as there are more students in-person than remotely, and she will share the number of teachers who are quarantined as a result of positive cases.

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

Chair Cottam noted that individuals interested in providing public comment were encouraged to submit written comments to the Council in advance of the meeting. Those written comments have been shared with Council members, are available at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and will be made part of the permanent record of this meeting. Chair Cottam stated that 16 people registered in advance to provide verbal testimony; the registration period closed at 5:30 p.m. on Monday. She noted that each speaker was afforded two minutes to speak; 16 individuals (teachers, parents, and a retired teacher/child advocate) signed-up to speak during the Open Forum shared their ongoing concerns with in-person instruction in the Providence schools.

Student Representative Feliz asked whether RIDE continues to visit schools to ensure that things are going well, and suggested that students who take public transportation get tested regularly.

Commissioner Infante-Green replied that RIDE continues to do unannounced spot-checks throughout the state, and in the case of Providence, she has also asked the Superintendent to do them as well. As far as testing students who take public transportation, RIDE will relay the message to RIDOH.

Commissioner Infante-Green stressed that RIDE can certainly listen to suggestions and advocate when necessary, but many of the issues raised need to be brought to the attention of school principals, who can provide assistance.

## 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chair Cottam asked that the order of the discussion items be reversed and start with the Rhode Island Strategic Plan for Education.

### a. RI Strategic Plan for Education – 2021-2025

Tom McCarthy, RIDE's Chief of Staff, began by explaining that this journey started over a year ago as RIDE developed the Commissioner's vision for reimagining education in Rhode Island. Shortly after that, a tremendous amount of work went into the Long-term Education Planning Committee and their collaboration with families, communities, school leaders, teachers, and students, as they developed the Chart a Course, Stay the Course framework, that laid out a vision for education in Rhode Island over the next five to 10 years. Over the last six-months, there was an intense effort to engage school communities, LEA leaders, superintendents, families, staff, surveys, and intense focus groups, to develop the document being shared.

Next, Mr. McCarthy went over RIDE's Mission and Vision, Values, and Theory of Action, and turned the presentation over the Ana Riley, Deputy Commissioner for Instructional Programs, who went over the Priorities' Statements and Measurable Goals – Equity; Excellence in Learning; and World Class Talent, and Dr. Kelvin Roldán, Deputy Commissioner for System Transformation, went over the Engaged Communities and Governance Structures.

Member Davis asked that the current proficiency rate be added to the first measurable goal on the Excellence in Learning Priority.

Member Purtil voiced his concern with the decrease percentage from 29% to 25% of inexperienced school leaders in high-poverty schools as it seems to be a minimal amount, since high-poverty schools need experienced school leaders. Members Callahan and Gaines echoed the same concern.

Deputy Riley replied that all of the percentages were determined by looking at the five-year trends and what growth has been made, and landing on a percentage that is both ambitious and achievable over the next five years.

Member Callahan asked how will RIDE support school leaders and teachers in meeting the plan's goals, particularly for those who were not part of the preparation and development process.

Deputy Riley replied that many school leaders, teachers, and many people across Rhode Island, were involved in the development of Chart a Course, Stay the Course framework, and RIDE shared a draft of the strategic plan with LEA leaders and asked for feedback both in survey form and written feedback, and tried to incorporate their suggestions as much as possible. The goal is for the State's strategic plan to provide a framework for districts to write their own strategic plans, so that there is alignment across the state to reach the intended goals.

#### b. District Accountability

Deputy Commissioner Roldán shared that today's presentation is on what has been accomplished since the brief update that Commissioner Infante-Green provided the Council back in June – how RIDE has interpreted the passage of the Education Accountability Act and the decisions that were made since that passage; how RIDE landed on the decision of elevating the star rating system to the district level; and a preview of how RIDE is thinking about the implementation of the tiered systems of support associated with the Act.

Next, Deputy Riley shared that since there were no state assessments administered this past school year, there will be no district accountability this winter, which gives us a year to pilot, work with districts, and collect feedback on the new system prior to putting it in place next winter.

Next, Jennifer Carney, RIDE's Director of School System Planning and Improvement, shared that The Education Accountability Act of 2019 now requires that school districts have a three-year strategic plan; annual state assessment planning (LEA and school); annual improvement plan (at every school level); a monitoring system in place at RIDE; and governance shifts and site-based management. She went over the purpose of the Accountability System; Guiding Principles;

Decision Process; and National Scans of District Accountability Systems that RIDE looked at, that elevated their states' accountability model, to a district accountability model.

Next, Scott Gausland, RIDE's Director of Data and Technology Services, went over the benefits of elevating the school accountability model to the district level; the district accountability report card; the district star ratings; the RI DataHUB; and what it all means for charter public schools.

Next, Ms. Carney shared that RIDE is looking for traditional districts and charter public schools to pilot with this year in order to be able to survey them on where they are at currently in their strategic planning process, how effective they feel their own strategic plan has been at guiding improvement within their districts and schools, where they are in their cycle, what they consider nonnegotiable, and how they engage stakeholders in their strategic planning process. RIDE will use that information to streamline a statewide strategic plan that will mirror the RIDE strategic plan. and then provide a three-year plan at the district level, which will inform the school improvement plan. RIDE is also inviting districts and school leaders to partner with while the RI DataHUB is being built so that they see the functionality of the strategic plan, the interactive nature, and to see how easy it is to get at the data and be able to make those decisions in real time. Ms. Carney and Mr. Gausland went over examples of RIDE supports and requirements of LEAs for the three to five-star districts, two-star districts and one-star districts, and the process and timeline of the deliverables.

Deputy Roldán ended the presentation by sharing that both he and Deputy Riley have been meeting with all LEAs and charter public schools both as a group and individually to socialize this and gather their feedback.

Member Callahan asked who RIDE has met with at the district level and who will be taking the survey that was mentioned. She also suggested that RIDE reach out to local union leadership as well to get their perspective.

Deputy Riley responded that the survey went out to LEA leadership, but since it was a blind survey, she could not tell who filled it out. As far as who RIDE met with at the district level, Deputy Roldán responded that RIDE has met directly with all superintendents as well as charter school leaders, and has socialized these ideas with the RI Association of School Committees (RIASC), the RI Association of School Principals (RIASP), and met with individual districts that are potentially in the one to two-star rating area.

Member Davis suggested that if this is going to be a living document that it would be helpful to list what the ESSA targets are as well as the State's.

## 6. ACTION ITEMS

### a. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2021 School Building Authority (SBA) Covid-19 Capital Fund Project Priorities

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves allocation of \$4,000,000 of the Fiscal Year 2021 School Building Authority Covid-19 Capital Fund, as presented

Vote: 7 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, 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 meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns

Vote: 7 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, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.