



Enclosure 2b
May 9, 2017

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
April 18, 2017

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Board Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the Work Session of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, stated for the record that Council Chair McConaghy and Council Member Purtill would not be attending the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Present: Barbara Cottam, *Colby Anderson, **Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

Absent: Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill

[*Ex-officio, non-voting member]
[**Amy Beretta arrived at 5:45 p.m.]

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 April 18, 2017, Work Session

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

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Amy Beretta arrived at 5:43 p.m.]

2. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began by apologizing to Council members for last week’s abrupt announcement of RIDE’s intent to adopt new state assessments, starting in the 2017-2018 school year. He explained that these assessments would continue to measure student progress on Rhode Island’s current grade-level learning standards and expectations while cutting overall testing time.

For students in grades 3 through 8, the state is in advanced discussions with Massachusetts to use the "RICAS," a Rhode Island administration of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). At the high school level, the state will use the PSAT and SAT to meet federal testing requirements.

The transition will affect only the state assessment tools; grade-level expectations and graduation requirements will remain the same, which means that teachers will not have to change their approach to classroom instruction. Parents are being notified of the changes, and although they can request to have their children opt-out of state assessments, federal law still requires that 95% of students be tested. To that end, RIDE has been very clear with superintendents about the importance of informing parents of the value and the role that assessments serve.

Next, Commissioner Wagner informed the Council that on May 8 he will be delivering the annual State of Education Address. This year the event will be more student-centered and is being held at the Davies Career Technical High School. Prior to the Address, there will be a student showcase featuring amazing practices happening in our schools, followed by a Q&A with questions submitted by students and selected by the RI Student Advisory Council.

To set context for the charter school discussion later on the agenda, Commissioner Wagner announced that the charter public schools just concluded their lottery for the coming school year. Over 15,000 charter school applications (a 29% increase from 2014) were received, with 57% being from parents of students in Providence. Only one out of every five students who applied for a charter school seat actually received a spot. Every charter school received more applicants than available seats.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Rhode Island's Third-grade Reading Action Plan - Update

Commissioner Wagner introduced the vision and goal of the Governor's Third-grade Reading Action Plan and shared that the Plan requires a great deal of interdepartmental collaboration (RIDE, EOHHS, DHS, DCYF, and DOH), and will be managed by the Children's Cabinet. He emphasized the importance of third grade reading results, as it is a key indicator of future success such as high school graduation and career readiness.

In order to reach the Governor's goal of doubling statewide third-grade reading proficiency currently at 30%, to 75%, by 2025, Commissioner Wagner emphasized the importance of collaborating and forging partnerships with key partners such as the RI Campaign for Third Grade Reading, Early Learning Council, Successful Start Steering Committee, Brown University as a research partner, and other state agencies.

Commissioner Wagner also stressed the need to address health determinants of school success and improve progress towards developmental milestones; expand access to high-quality care; ensure early literacy instruction is of high-quality; increase early literacy instructional time to ensure that we have alignment among our literacy plans; respond to the needs of high-risk children; and increase public awareness by developing a campaign strategy around the work.

Council members expressed the need to place just as much focus on numeracy as we do on literacy.

b. Charter 2015-2016 Annual Report and Next Steps/Process for Renewals - Part 1

Brian Darrow, Director of Career and Readiness, began by introducing Paula Barney, Charter School Coordinator, who has been instrumental in leading the work with the implementation of the Charter Performance Review System.

Part of a continuous conversation to prepare Council Members for big decisions around charter schools, this evening's discussion is the first of a two-part presentation on the new Charter Performance Review System; the 2015-16 charter high-level annual performance ratings; the timeline for the 2017 charter renewal process; and the current tier designations for 2017 charter renewals.

Director Darrow went on to describe the four overall indicators that RIDE uses to evaluate each charter school's cohesive performance:

- academic (primary indicator)
- financial;
- organizational; and
- sustainability

Director Darrow ended by going over the renewal process and explained that once a school enters into that process, RIDE looks at the most recent two-years (2013-14 and 2015-16 - excludes 2014-15 due to accountability transition) of performance and places that school into a renewal tier. This allows for high-achieving charters up for renewal to have an expedited renewal process as opposed to low-performing charters. Schools receive "no tier" designation if they have insufficient data in either year.

Changes to the renewal process is the result of a yearlong working group, which included participation from the League of Charter Schools. The League is very much in favor of the annual reporting and the framework aspects of it, allowing for more frequent conversations with RIDE.

Council members praised the process and suggested using this same type of process to evaluate our traditional schools that have not made any progress for several years.

c. Necessity of School Construction Projects

- 1. Bristol Warren**
- 2. Central Falls**
- 3. Cumberland**
- 4. East Greenwich**
- 5. The Greene School**
- 6. Kingston Hill Academy**
- 7. Lincoln**
- 8. New Shoreham**
- 9. Pawtucket**
- 10. Scituate**
- 11. Warwick**

Cindy Brown, Director of Statewide Efficiencies, explained that each of the eleven projects went through a very rigorous review process by the School Building Authority (SBA) team at RIDE. The projects were also presented to the members of the SBA Advisory Board at their April 11, 2017, meeting, who voted to recommend the projects for Council approval. All of the projects that came in this year passed through the necessity process and there were sufficient funds available to fund them all. Most of the projects, with the exception of two, will address issues around heating, lighting, and general upkeep of the schools.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Colleen Callahan, 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:
	YEAS:	Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos
	NAYS:	0

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.