



**Enclosure 2a**  
**April 5, 2016**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**February 9, 2016**

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Tuesday, February 9, 2016, at the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

**Present:** Daniel McConaghy, \*Colby Anderson, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

**Absent:** Jo Eva Gaines

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

Chair McConaghy stated for the record that member Gaines would not be joining the evening's meeting.

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Colleen Callahan it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of February 9, 2016

**Vote:** 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** 0

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**2a. Minutes of the January 6, 2016, Council Meeting**

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Joyce Stevos, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the January 6, 2016, Council Meeting

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Members Callahan and Purtill recused themselves from the vote as they did not attend the January 6, 2016, meeting]

**2b. Minutes of the January 26, 2016, Council Work Session**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the January 26, 2016, Council Work Session

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

[Member Callahan recused herself from this vote as she did not attend the January 26, 2016, meeting]

**3. OPEN FORUM**

Providence students, Clara Olivia, Deyssa Victor and Hector Jimenez, spoke in opposition to using a standardized test as a graduation requirement.

Debbie Flitman - Parents Across Rhode Island, spoke in opposition to using a standardized test as a graduation requirement.

Rick Richards – Coalition to Defend Public Schools, spoke in opposition to using a standardized test as a graduation requirement.

Documents provided to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education by Open Forum speakers are on file at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Board Chair Cottam began her report by sharing that the previous week, she and Commissioner Wagner, participated in an Education Sector convening with Senator Whitehouse, hosted by the R.I. Foundation. The dialogue focused on the differences between the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the No Child Left Behind Act, and what it means for R.I. going forward. She expressed that Commissioner Wagner's vision and focus on school and family empowerment, rigorous standards, concurrent coursework at the college level, and support and resources for teachers and school leaders, aligns well with the principles of the new Act.

Chair Cottam also reported that she is pleased that even in this challenging economic climate, Governor Raimondo, in her State of the State Address last week, proposed a budget for the next fiscal year that includes significant support and new money for public education.

**6. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER**

In the interest of time, Commissioner Wagner deferred the report of the Commissioner, and as a segue to the first discussion item on the diploma system, he expressed that what he is most concerned about, and what keeps him up at night, are continuing practices that lead students to believe that they are ready for the world in which they are going to enter, when in fact they are grotesquely unprepared for that world. Finding nuanced policy in order to address those concerns is very much the conversation happening statewide.

He then turned the conversation over to Mary Ann Snider, RIDE's Chief of Educator Excellence, for a walk-through on the public conversations that RIDE has been having with different stakeholders over the last several weeks on the Diploma System and graduation requirements.

## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### a. Diploma System – Update

Ms. Snider began her update by sharing that all the stakeholders meetings start with RIDE's vision – A R.I. graduate is one, who is well prepared for postsecondary education, work, and life. He or she can think critically and collaboratively and can act as a creative, self-motivated, culturally competent learner and citizen - This vision, born out of the work done last year to form the Strategic Plan, is representative of the 10,000 Rhode Islanders who helped to shape the plan. Going forward, RIDE needs to be mindful of this vision and see it as the central mission to ensure that the High School Regulations are in place to honor, uphold, and support all kids.

Shen then went over a PowerPoint presentation on graduation and achievement data and how R.I. students fair compared to neighboring states; remediation rates; existing graduation requirements; the revision process of the high school regulations; input session participation; considerations for a future diploma and for endorsements; and emerging themes from feedback of the public meetings.

Commissioner Wagner expressed that in R.I., graduation rates (about 81%), which is the measure of completion, do not correlate with the measure of readiness (about 40%). There needs to be thoughtful and collaborative conversations to find a way to set up an aspirational mark that closes the gap between readiness and completion, while having different approaches to safety nets to ensure that we don't lose students along the way or get in the way of them earning a credential.

Council members questioned whether RIDE has the capacity to vet all of the potential pathways described in the presentation. They also discussed setting aspirational targets in getting students to meet cut-scores in assessments; establishing comparability measures and having fewer validator measures to claim the comparability; allowing for different pathways and endorsements to graduate students; ending remediation classes at the college level and instead placing students in college credit-bearing courses with support systems in place, which is a much better learning experience than being surrounded by low expectations.

### b. School and Family Empowerment – Update

Commissioner Wagner began by stating that Governor Raimondo, in her State of the State Address, mentioned school and family empowerment, an initiative that RIDE has been working on and will be formally introducing legislation, with input from various stakeholders, on what we envision empowerment to look like.

He went over a PowerPoint presentation on school and family empowerment titled *Creating Conditions that Foster Cultures of Excellence and Continuous Improvement in Schools*. He focused on a set of words, *conditions and cultures*, and explained that we are creating conditions rather than forcing people to do things. He shared that it is equally important to him that we come out of this exercise looking at leadership cultures that either exist or don't exist in schools. Creating conditions that foster cultures of excellence and continuous improvement are really an important lens into how he thinks about school reform and school leadership.

He noted that Massachusetts took a similar approach 20 years ago by adopting high learning standards; school and family empowerment; and alignment of stakeholders, and with lessons learned along the way, and it is now considered best in the nation. He explained that standards and accountability are necessary, but are not sufficient conditions for excellence and equity, and that innovation in how we do schooling is a missing component of our equity strategy. We are never going to get our students fully engaged, unless we change how we do schooling. Furthermore, there is a need to close the equity gaps and ensure that every student has access to, and is prepared for, advanced coursework in high school. Advanced coursework opportunities should support pathways and the strengths and interests of students, but in order to achieve this vision, we need to support culture and leadership development in school communities.

He explained how school and family empowerment through inter-district enrollment transfer would work, and why it's a necessary part of the school empowerment package. He ended the presentation by expressing that this is a unique opportunity of alignment of goals and vision for the state and the economy, and pretty well aligned with the stuff that parents want, and what we are trying to do, for our kids, which is to prepare them to be productive citizens and with qualities that 21<sup>st</sup> century employers need to make our state and economy stronger.

### **c. Dual Enrollment – Proposed List of Course Offerings**

Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Accelerating School Performance, went over the proposed list of concurrent enrollment course offerings and course costs at the public institutions of postsecondary education, which must be annually established by the postsecondary institutions and approved by the Board of Education.

Council members asked to be provided with a list of high schools and the number of students who are taking advantage of dual and concurrent courses.

**7. ACTION ITEMS**

**a. Approval of new members to the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees**

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of Clark Greene and Lorén Spears to the Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, as presented.

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

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

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

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.