



RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Enclosure 2a
November 13, 2013**

A Rhode Island Board of Education work session was held on Thursday, October 3rd, 2013, at the Department of Education, Room 501, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the work session to order at 4:10 p.m.

Present: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael Grande, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

Absent: William C. Maaia

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Karin Forbes it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the work session of October 3, 2013.

Vote: 10 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael Grande, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

NAYS: 0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Item 2a – RIDE FY 2015 Operating Budget and 2014 Supplemental Budget

Commissioner Gist introduced the three budgets for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

- FY 2014 Revised Budget
- FY 2015 Current Service Level Budget
- Constrained FY 2015 Budget

As for the FY 2014 budget, the Commissioner advised that there were few changes including a small increase based on Group Home Aid and a surplus resulting from some school construction that has been rolled over into FY 2015. The FY 2015 Current Service Level budget includes an overall increase of 5.3%. The largest increase items are the funding formula and teachers' retirement.

With respect to the Constrained Budget, the Department was able to achieve a \$2.2M in savings through various departments within the agency. Reductions were made by the Davies Career and Tech, Group Home Aid, RI School for the Deaf, and Channel 36 Grant as well as the phase out of Project Vision, the elimination of funds for school breakfast administrative support aid and reimbursement for the non-public text book loan program. The constrained budget is \$1,010,223,718.

Board Members shared their concerns with respect to the Funding Formula, and Commissioner Gist agreed to have the matter scheduled for further discussion at an upcoming Board meeting.

Item 2b – Higher Education FY 2015 Operating Budget

Susan LaPanne, Associate Commissioner for Finance and Management, provided a broad overview of the Higher Education budget. The total Higher Education budget is roughly \$1B, broken into unrestricted and restricted funds. The unrestricted funds refer to tuition and fees which are set by the Board as well as State appropriations. The restricted funds include all the RICAP funds, State funds, as well as enterprise funds such as the dining hall, registration fees, etc.

The 2014-2015 budget was built on the assumption of no increase in tuition and fees as well as a zero increase in salary and wages. Even with these assumptions, the 2014-2105 budget comes in at \$19.5M more than the Current Service Level budget. These significant increases come from items such as State negotiated health and dental coverage, utilities, insurance, licensing fees, etc. over which the Presidents have no control. Dr. LaPanne explained that although the budget contains funds for the Office of Higher Education, these funds do not include an operating budget, and only include pass-through items such as parking fees, etc.

Item 2c – Diploma System – Update on Optional Assessments Monitoring of District Support for Students

Commissioner Gist asked Andrea Castaneda, Chief of Accelerating School Performance, to update the Board on Item 2c.

Ms. Castaneda began with a brief overview of the main components of the Diploma System. She explained that students must complete all three components successfully before they may earn a diploma.

- **Course Completion** – Requires that students successfully complete at least 20 courses in core content areas including math, science, technology, reading, social studies, and the arts. Students have the opportunity to accelerate learning and make up missing courses.
- **Performance Based Assessments** – Real-life experiences that require cross-cutting skills, including communication, problem solving, creativity, and teamwork. Students have multiple opportunities to master skills and complete their performance-based assessments.
- **State Assessment** – Requires a demonstration of the essential literacy and numeracy skills necessary for success. Students have multiple opportunities to retake the test, are given full credit for improvement, and can substitute other approved assessments.

Ms. Castaneda provided an outline of the test-based element of the graduation requirements. She explained that students in their junior year must score partially proficient (2) or better on the NECAP. As seniors, these same students must show improvement on the NECAP, by either scoring partially proficient (2) or show growth. Seniors will also receive a Progress Plan that provides intensive support until requirements are met. Ms. Castaneda explained that “growth” means that a student has shown a “level of improvement which exceeds random chance.” Ms. Castaneda explained that achievement on another alternate test, such as the SATs, PSATs, etc., is also a way for students to show that they are ready to graduate. She added that there are few students who will meet the requirement through another means even before they begin their junior year.

Students who are taking the NECAP this fall will receive their scores the following February. At that time those students will know whether or not they have made growth. A concern was expressed that February may be too late for students to be notified of their scores and given their options. Chair Mancuso indicated that she is more concerned with what supports are in place for the students versus the timing of when the results are being delivered.

Chair Mancuso advised that she has communicated with District Superintendents and asked them to inform the Board what procedures have been put in place to help the Class of 2014 reach the requirements to achieve a diploma. The Chair has put together an Ad Hoc Committee to assist and study the districts response to students who did not pass the NECAP. Board members Purtill, Callahan, Gaines and Forbes have agreed to serve on this Committee.

Item 2d – Update on the Common Core State Standards – Communications and Outreach Ambassadors

Commissioner Gist noted that the Common Core State Standards were adopted in the summer of 2010. Since then there has been a lot of work done to transition, train, and prepare. In addition to the work being done by our educators, there is a lot of interest from the public outside the school community. The Commissioner advised that the Department was fortunate to receive a grant from the GE Foundation which will allow it to develop materials to bring together the public, including parents, in understanding the Common Core.

The Commissioner asked Phyllis Lynch, Director of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum to walk the Board through Item 2d and provide more in depth information. Ms. Lynch presented the Communication Plan for the Common Core State Standards. A timeline from its inception in 2010 through 2015 was also provided to the Board.

The Board members discussed the importance of Higher Education’s involvement with the Common Core standards. Everyone agreed that Higher Education’s involvement with the Common Core is critical for the Board’s higher education plan in Rhode Island.

Chair Mancuso presented Item 2g at this time to accommodate President Carriuolo’s speaking engagement this evening at the College. The Chair asked Clark Greene to provide an update on the Higher Education governance plan since the Board’s last meeting.

Item 2g – Discussion of Higher Education Governance

Mr. Greene advised that the Executive Committee met on September 23rd and were joined by Aims McGuinness. The Committee had a good meeting and discussion on governance structure issues. Mr. Greene is working on a handout that will be provided to the Board as a

rough draft at Monday's meeting and will again provide an updated handout at the Work Session scheduled for October 21st which will be dedicated solely to Higher Education's governance structure. Aims McGuinness will be in attendance on the 21st to answer any questions the Board may have.

Item 2f – Approval of the Proposed Agreement with the Town of South Kingstown related to Plains Road

Vern Wyman, Vice President for Administration and Finance with the University indicated that the University has recently completed a roadway extension that connects with Plains Road. This connection will add access around the campus for local residents. With this agreement, Plains Road will remain a Town road while the University assumes the responsibility for its maintenance. The Town and the University will share the expense of repavement of a portion of this road at this time.

Item 2e – Charter Schools – Preliminary Approvals

Commissioner Gist introduced three new charter school proposals being recommended for preliminary approval. The Commissioner explained that preliminary approval can only take place after an extensive vetting process. Once preliminary approval has been given, the charter school founders may begin their search for a facility and staff members while they reach out to potential students and the community. The Commissioner stated that preliminary approval does not grant applicants the authority to operate as a school and all requests must come back before the Board to secure final approval.

Commissioner Gist turned the presentation over to Drew Allsopp, Charter School Coordinator, for further details. Mr. Allsopp presented a detailed timeline of the step-by-step process applicants must complete as a process for preliminary approval.

Several Board members posed questions and shared their concerns on the impact on loss of funding to the communities where the charter schools may exist. There was also discussion of the teacher to student ratio at charter schools versus the traditional schools and the total impact on the public schools for the cities or towns where the charter schools may be located.

Mr. Allsopp presented the three preliminary applicants as:

- Southside Elementary Charter School (K-5 serving Providence children)
- Engineering Early College Academy (high school in Providence)
- The Hope Academy (K-8 serving North Providence)

The discussion on Charter Schools concluded at this time.

Member Guida shared with the Board and invitation by NASBE to bring an institute on summer learning to Rhode Island at no charge. NASBE will provide the staff for the presentation. This has been proven to be a great attribute to those districts who take advantage of it, particularly urban districts. Mr. Guida asked that this be put on the agenda for discussion by the Board and reply to NASBE.

3. NEXT MEETING

Monday, October 7th, 5:30 p.m.
Mt. Hope High School, Bristol-Warren School District, Bristol

4. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Matthies Santos it was

VOTED: That the work session of the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourn.

Vote: 10 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael Grande, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

NAYS: 0

The work session adjourned at 5:50 p.m.