



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2014**

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education met on Monday, September 8, 2014 at the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, R.I. Chair Guida welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Attendance was as follows:

Amy Beretta: present
Colleen A. Callahan: present
Karin Forbes: present
Jo Eva Gaines: absent
Patrick A. Guida: present
Eva-Marie Mancuso: present
Lawrence Purtill: present
Mathies Santos: present
Joyce Stevos: present

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 meeting of September 8, 2014.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

2. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

Chair Guida began the meeting by presenting certificates on behalf of the R.I. Board of Education to The Greene Charter Public School and the Pell Elementary School in Newport, both national winners of the Green Ribbon Schools Award.

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Guida reminded everyone wishing to address the Board that they would be limited to two minutes per person. The following individuals spoke:

Dennis Curran, Executive Director, NEL-CPS Career and Construction Academy

Mr. Curran thanked the Council and RIDE staff for their support and consideration of the renewal of the school's charter.

Michael Traficante, Board Chair, NEL-CPS Career and Construction Academy

Mr. Traficante thanked the Council and RIDE for their continued support of NEL-CPS Career and Construction Academy.

Alan Neville, Board Member – Academy for Career Exploration

Mr. Neville thanked the Council and RIDE staff for their support during the renewal process.

Steve Brown, Executive Director, ACLU

Mr. Brown spoke in opposition of charging a fee more summer school attendance.

Nancy DeRobbio, Head of School – Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts

Ms. DeRobbio thanked the Council and RIDE staff for their support during the renewal process.

Deanna Duncan, Head of School – The Greene School

Ms. Duncan thanked the Council and RIDE staff for their support during the renewal process.

Abismel Vargas, Student at the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, spoke passionately about how the school has changed his life.

Shaydee Saythideth, Student at the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, spoke about how the school has provided her with the necessary tools to reach her goals.

Ana Vargas, Parent of student at the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, praised the school for providing her son and her family with quality education.

Brother Michael Reis, CEO, TIDES Family Services, spoke in opposition of charging a fee for summer school attendance.

Veronika Kot, R.I. Legal Services, read letters from two parents in opposition of charging a fee for summer school attendance.

Richard Ianatelli, Smithfield School Department, spoke in support of Smithfield's request for Necessity of School Construction Projects.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Guida reported that this school year districts are implementing a new law, which changes the frequency of evaluating tenured teachers who are graded effective or highly effective. RIDE has sent guidance to the field last month implementing this new law, and they are talking with a number of interested parties to develop a set of options to help districts implement it.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER **Updates and issues affecting local and national education.**

Commissioner Gist reported that to celebrate the start of the new school year, she visited schools in Coventry and Pawtucket, where she witnessed some exciting things going on. During her visits, she emphasized several important initiatives that will be under way this year, notably the work toward expanding student access to challenging high-school courses.

She next encouraged Council members in joining this year's annual Celebration of Educator Excellence at a WaterFire event where district and state teachers-of-the-year and other award-winning educators will be honored.

She also encouraged Council members to once again take advantage of joining RIDE at its annual Innovation Powered by Technology conference on October 25th, which will include a number of sessions designed and presented by many R.I. educators around effective use of technology and digital learning.

Next, she reported that one of RIDE's priorities this year will be to take steps to reduce chronic absenteeism. RIDE is committed to providing schools, districts, and the public with timely data on absenteeism rates in an effort to help promote the importance of regular attendance. RIDE has been a national leader in tracking chronic absenteeism and has joined five other states (Arizona, California, Maryland, New Mexico, and Utah) on an Advisory Committee to End Chronic Absence, which was brought together by the Campaign for Grade Level Reading.

Lastly, Commissioner Gist reported that RIDE continues to work closely with districts on educator evaluation, particularly responding to the legislation that was recently passed, and making sure that districts have the information and the support that they need. Beginning in August 2014 and going forward, educators will be evaluated only once every two years if they are effective, and once every three years, if they are highly effective.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6a. Strategic Planning

Chair Guida reported that there is an exciting opportunity in R.I. for everyone, including stakeholders, to engage in developing a great PK-20 initiative being called "Education 2020." This PK-20 effort is being led by both the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, with Board Chair Mancuso leading the discussion to develop a set of shared overall goals.

Over the course of the next 10 months, RIDE will be convening and facilitating a statewide conversation that we are calling, "Education 2020." Public PK-12 education is comprised of a number of important and linked units, which includes each member of the R.I. Board of Education, the Governor and General Assembly, RIDE, school districts and schools, teachers, families, students, early childhood and adult education, and the community and social service organizations that serve the state of R.I. The idea is to bring Rhode Islanders together and have them be part of the planning process and in the ultimate vision of public education in our state.

He went on to describe the three stages of the Education 2020 plan. Stage one focuses on broad outreach and mainly understanding the interests and priorities that are being collected through the statewide conversation and high-level data. Stage two focuses on smaller scale and richer outreach to collect deeper information from the community. Stage three focuses on transforming the skeleton work completed by the stakeholder group into a publishable vision for public education.

Throughout the process, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and the entire Board of Education will be engaged in providing leadership as well as responding to the public voice.

Commissioner Gist imagines a process that is very much driven by the voices of everyone across the state and pointed out that because the R.I. Board of Education is responsible for PK-20 education, this really needs to be a plan that belongs to R.I. As such, there will be a point at which RIDE will need to decide how it's going to operationalize its work based on the overall plan, because it will include parts of education that are beyond the walls of RIDE.

Board Chair Mancuso voiced her concern with the fact that a title has already been given to the strategic planning process and that she would like to see a more functional part of tasks than starting with anything out in the public that talks about "Education 2020." The Board certainly has not made a decision on a title or even a focus and she wants to be very clear that the development and the focus need to come from the Board of Education.

Chair Guida encouraged all Council members to comment on the process and also provide feedback.

Member Callahan shared Chair Mancuso's concerns and stated that before the strategic plan gets too much further down the road that it is critical for the Board to have an opportunity to provide feedback. She suggested scheduling an open-ended session devoted to strategic planning so that Board members can talk about their ideas and thoughts before moving on to the strategic planning process.

Commissioner Gist explained that process and content are the two most important factors of the plan and that what RIDE needed from the Board at this meeting was about the process to ensure that the Board's message is being carried out in a way that is consistent with what the Board thinks is most effective, and also how to best engage Board members. In terms of content, RIDE definitely wants to hear from each Board member about what their priorities are and what they imagine for education by year 2020. She also encouraged Board members to wrestle with the same thing that she has been wrestling with, which is, that for this to really be a plan that emerges from our stakeholders, everyone needs to do a lot of listening as well, with the content.

Chair Mancuso also suggested scheduling a special session on strategic planning for the full Board and the college presidents so that they too can weigh in and share their thoughts and ideas.

6b. Budget Briefing

As a follow-up to the FY 2015 budget cycle orientation provided to the Council at its August 25th work session, Commissioner Gist reported that RIDE continues to carefully manage the current FY 2015 budget, while simultaneously developing the FY 2016 budget in accordance with instructions provided by the state budget office.

She then turned the conversation over to Andrea Castaneda, Chief of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, and Mark Dunham, Director of Finance, who walked the Council through a presentation on the changes to the FY 2016 budget, both as a comparison to previous years and as a free standing presentation, and also answered the questions that Council members asked RIDE to do some additional research on at their last work session.

At their October 14th meeting, the Council will be asked to vote on the revised FY 2015 budget as well as the proposed FY 2016 budget.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7a. Approval of the Appeals Committee Recommendations

7a1. Fermin Ciprian v. Providence School Board

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education affirms the Commissioner's decision in the matter of Fermin Ciprian v. Providence School Board

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7a2. Student G. Doe v. Cumberland School District

On a motion duly made by Larry Purtill and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education table the Commissioner's decision in the matter of Student G. Doe v. Cumberland School District and schedule another discussion after the Council has had the opportunity to review the entire file on the case

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7b. Approval of RIDE's Executive Pay Plan and Organizational Chart

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Eva Marie Mancuso, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves RIDE's Executive Pay Plan for FY 2012, FY 2013, FY 2014, FY2015, and RIDE's Organizational Chart

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7c. Appointment of nominee to the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of George H. Nee to serve on the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School Board of Trustees, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7d1. Approval of the renewal of the charter of The Greene School

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew the charter of The Greene School for a term of up to five (5) years, to operate in accordance with and comply with the condition set forth in this recommendation from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7d2. Approval of the renewal of the charter of the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew the charter of Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts for a term of up to five (5) years, to operate in accordance with and comply with the conditions set forth in this recommendation from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, as presented

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

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

NAYS: 0

RECUSAL: Joyce Stevos

As a member and President of the Board of the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts Charter School, Member Stevos recused herself from the conversation and vote.

7d3. Approval of the renewal of the charter of the NEL-CPS Career and Construction Academy

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew the charter of NEL-CPS Career and Construction Academy for a term of up to five (5) years, to operate in accordance with and comply with the conditions set forth in this recommendation from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7d4. Approval of the renewal of the Academy for Career Exploration

On a motion duly made by Mathies Santos and seconded by Eva-Marie Mancuso, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew the charter of Academy for Career Exploration for a term of up to five (5) years, to operate in accordance with and comply with the conditions set forth in this recommendation from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7e1. Approval of Necessity of School Construction Projects - Bristol Warren

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves Bristol Warren's necessity of school construction projects totaling \$11,297,669 pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7e2. Approval of Necessity of School Construction Projects - East Providence

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves East Providence's necessity of school construction projects totaling \$10,000,000 pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7e3. Approval of Necessity of School Construction Projects - Pawtucket

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves Pawtucket's necessity of school construction projects totaling \$46,040,801 pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7e4. Approval of Necessity of School Construction Projects - Narragansett

On a motion duly made by Larry Purtill and seconded by Eva-Marie Mancuso, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves Narragansett's necessity of school construction projects totaling \$2,880,450 pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7e5. Approval of Necessity of School Construction Projects – Smithfield

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves Smithfield’s necessity of school construction projects totaling \$5,438,328 pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7-41.1, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

7f. Approval of proposed revisions to the Secondary School Regulations for the purpose of public review and comment

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves, for the purpose of public review and comment, the revised Regulations of the Board of Education K-12 Literacy, Restructuring of the Learning Environment at the Middle and High School Levels, and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements at High Schools, as presented

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

Member Purtill suggested scheduling several public hearings given the statewide public interest in the topic. Commissioner Gist answered that three public hearings were being planned, but additional hearings would be scheduled, if necessary.

Member Callahan asked that when RIDE reports back to the Council on the public feedback, if it could also do a presentation on the kinds of supports that it intends to do as well as on the monitoring of the PARCC performance assessments data on all of the students.

Chair Mancuso also suggested pushing school districts to continue supporting and motivating students like they did last summer and not wait five years and have the same results during the first year of the PARCC assessments.

Member Purtill asked whether or not the recent lawsuit in New Mexico against PARCC is affecting R.I. at all. Deputy Abbott explained that the lawsuit was brought upon by an unsuccessful vendor who did not bid on the contract and challenged the bid. RIDE is in regular contact with the Commissioner and General Counsel in New Mexico, who are very confident with the process. Other states are not slowing down and are signing their contracts with Pearson.

Member Beretta voiced that if the NECAP is not being administered that she would like to see some type other type of standardized test being administered, hence continuing to hold students and schools continue accountable and ensuring that they are ready and able to take the PARCC assessment in 2020. Commissioner Gist replied that RIDE made the decision that for this coming fall the NECAP assessment is not going to be administered for the Juniors (class of 2016), but that instead the schools will determine which PARCC exam students will take based on which classes they're in. The Science NECAP will continue being administered as it has in the past.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Guida entertained a motion to enter into executive session to discuss:

8a. Commissioner Gist's performance review, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1)

Chair Guida noted for the record that Commissioner Gist had been notified of her right to have the discussion in item 8a held in open session and that she has indicated no objection to proceeding in executive session.

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Eva-Marie Mancuso, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education convenes in executive session pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1) for the reason set forth above.

After a short break, the Board convened in executive session at 7:23 p.m.

All non-Council members in the audience were excused with the exception of Deborah Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Council reconvened in open session at 8:30 p.m.

Chair Guida reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

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

VOTED: That the RI Board of Education seals the minutes of the executive session held on September 8, 2014

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Patrick Guida, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Eva-Marie Mancuso, Lawrence Purtill, Mathies Santos, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

11. ADJOURNMENT:

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

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

Vote: 9 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, Patrick Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill and Mathies Santos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.