



Enclosure 2a  
May 17, 2016

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**March 2, 2016**

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Wednesday, March 2, 2016, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick.

Attendance was as follows:

Colby Anderson: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Amy Beretta: present  
Michael Bernstein: present  
Colleen Callahan: present  
Barbara Cottam: present  
Dennis Duffy: present (arrived at 5:50 p.m.)  
Karin Forbes: present  
William Foulkes: **absent**  
Jo Eva Gaines: present  
Constance Howes: present (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Thomas Izzo: present  
Marta Martinez: present  
Daniel McConaghy: present  
Judy Ouellette: **absent**  
Lawrence Purtill: present  
Kerry Rafanelli: present  
John Rainone: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
John J. Smith, Jr.: present  
Joyce Stevos: **absent**  
Stephan Pryor: **absent** (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Jeffery Williams: present

Chair Barbara Cottam welcomed everyone to the quarterly meeting of the R.I. Board of Education, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. She stated for the record that Chair Foulkes and Members Ouellette and Stevos would not be joining the meeting, Commissioner Purcell would not be joining the meeting this evening as he was testifying at the state house, and President Dooley, who was also testifying, would be arriving late.

## 1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

A motion was duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Daniel McConaghy to accept the agenda, but prior to voting on the motion, Chair Cottam entertained a motion to amend the agenda as follows:

Postpone/delete discussion of item 6c – Summer Melt – as Commissioner Purcell, who had planned to present, would not be joining the meeting.

She then asked for a motion to amend the agenda.

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Michael Bernstein it was

**VOTED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the motion to amend the agenda for the meeting of March 2, 2016.

Vote: 13 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John J. Smith, Jr., and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

[Dennis Duffy arrived at 5:50 p.m.]

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

### 2a. Minutes of the October 28, 2015, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the October 28, 2015, meeting

Vote: 13 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Daniel McConaghy, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John J. Smith, Jr., and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

**[Dennis Duffy arrived at 5:50 p.m.]**

Next, Chair Cottam welcomed the new president of CCRI, Meghan Hughes, to her first meeting of the Board of Education, thanked her and the CCRI staff for hosting the evening's meeting, and asked her to say a few words.

President Hughes expressed her gratitude to the students, staff, and faculty for welcoming her to CCRI and shared a few early impressions of her first month on the job. She has been spending lots of time learning from everyone about what is working, what we should do more of, and what needs to be done that is new and different. She shared that in the early days she and her staff are tackling the master schedule, discussing multiple measures, and redesigning developmental coursework -- key areas that will serve the students better and are designed to quickly take on CCRI's graduation and transfer rates and make progress quickly. She expressed that, in order for the system to succeed, CCRI must partner effectively with the PK-12 system, with Rhode Island College, with URI, and with Commissioner Purcell and his staff to design effective pathways for students.

**3. OPEN FORUM**

Chair Cottam reported that no one had signed up to speak at Open Forum

**4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRS**

**Chair of the Board of Education**

Chair Cottam reported that she is planning on creating by nomination an ad-hoc committee comprised of six members of the Board of Education for the purpose of examining and reporting on three initiatives:

- The first initiative that the ad-hoc committee will be examining concerns the overarching policy goals and joint areas of work of the Board of Education that are in the Strategic Plan, which will drive and define the collective work of the PK-12 and postsecondary education. These joint areas of work identify the particular areas in which the system needs to work together to achieve the Board's collective vision and serve as bookends to the plan.

- The second initiative is dual and concurrent enrollment, which is part of Governor Raimondo's Prepare R.I. initiative. The committee will look at courses offered, enrollment data, and the reporting process.
- The third initiative concerns the barriers to timely enrollment and the advantages of summer intervention to prevent "Summer Melt," a term traditionally used by college admissions officers to describe the phenomenon that students pay a deposit to attend a particular college but do not matriculate at that college the following fall, or college-intending students fail to enroll in college at all in the fall following high school graduation.

Chair Cottam will share more details on the ad-hoc committee in the coming weeks.

#### **Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education**

Chair McConaghy began his report by congratulating Commissioner Wagner on his recent appointment by the U.S. Secretary of Education to serve on the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The NAGB sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card. As a member, Commissioner Wagner will ensure that Rhode Island educators have a voice in determining the future of next-generation assessment practices and the role that assessments will play in supporting great teaching and learning.

Next, Chair McConaghy reported that at a news conference last week, Governor Raimondo announced that the four-year statewide high school graduation rate rose across all student groups to its highest level ever. Across the state, 24 high schools had a graduation rate of 90% or better, with North Providence High School leading the pack at 98%. He stressed that while we need to continue with that trend, we also need to be sure that a diploma truly signifies that our students graduate well prepared for success in postsecondary schooling and in challenging careers.

#### **Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education**

In Chair Foulkes's absence, Chair Cottam reported that the search for the next President of R.I. College is underway and that a job description has been posted. The first meeting of the search committee was held on February 29<sup>th</sup> and the Board of Education is represented on that committee by Council Member Izzo and Council Student Representative Rainone. The committee also includes three RIC faculty members, the head of the PSA at R.I. College, and R.I. College's alumni and foundation presidents, as well as other members of the community.

She went on to report that the leadership at all campuses has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis to collaborate on the performance funding metrics that will likely be presented to the legislature this spring.

## 5. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

### **Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Chair Cottam stated that Commissioner Wagner asked to pass on his report as he is going to be making a presentation during the discussion items part of the meeting

### **Commissioner of Postsecondary Education**

In Commissioner Purcell's absence, Susan LaPanne, Associate Commissioner for Postsecondary Education, reported on some of the initiatives taking place in the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner.

She reported that the work on the funding formula and the performance funding model is in full swing. The work is being led by Dennis Jones from MGem and a full report will be provided to the Board of Education at a future meeting.

Next, she shared that the new and improved website for the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner is up and running, replacing and merging the websites of the former R.I. Board of Governors for Higher Education and the R.I. Higher Education Assistance Authority.

She also shared that the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner is participating in the Graduate Rhode Island program. This is a partnership with national and local organizations, public and private institutions of postsecondary education, community, and business and industry partners. The goal is to align all of the existing resources to assist and create different pathways for a vast number of Rhode Island adults who have some type of postsecondary education and who want to come back and complete the degrees that they may have started in the past.

Another exciting initiative is the R.I. Promise Scholarship Program. The program was initiated in 2015 by Governor Raimondo to infuse more financial aid into the system and also to change the way in which state grants were administered. The moneys are being invested in a more strategic fashion, allowing the public institutions of postsecondary education to design their own program to achieve more dollars that are strategically placed for needs-based scholarships.

Finally, Associate Commissioner LaPanne reported on another of Governor Raimondo's initiatives, Prepare R.I. Funded by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner through the Division of Higher Education Authority, it allows for students, through dual enrollment, to take college courses at the public institutions of postsecondary education with no cost to their families.

## 6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Enclosure 6a – Governor’s Education Budget Proposal – Overview

Chair Cottam introduced Kevin Gallagher, Governor’s Deputy Chief of Staff, who presented an outline of Governor Raimondo’s FY 2017 Budget.

Mr. Gallagher began by stressing Governor Raimondo’s mission, which is to create a stronger economy so everyone can make it in Rhode Island.

He highlighted the key features of the budget:

- R.I. is making economic progress and moving in the right direction;
- R.I. is bending the cost curve in Medicaid;
- Pension reform and reinventing Medicaid – More than \$1.1. billion in savings over 5 years;
- The need to address the decline that R.I. has seen in advanced industries – the average advanced industries worker earned nearly twice as much as the average worker outside of the sector – and also a decline in median household income;
- Record investments in education and workforce development;
- Minimum wage and earned income tax credit increases;
- Strengthen neighborhood schools and address high-density charter impact;
- Address high-cost special needs;
- New support to districts with high percentages of English language learners;
- Strengthening maintenance-of-effort requirement;
- New initiatives to prepare students for college or careers – P-Tech, Prepare R.I., Free SAT/PSAT;
- Investing in Higher Education;
- Training workers with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

Reverend Williams asked that Mr. Gallagher provide additional information on the Innovation Center competition. Mr. Gallagher indicated that these are bond initiatives, and, as such, the Governor proposes them to the General Assembly, which holds hearings and make decisions on the bonds. This year’s bond initiatives will go to the voters for approval this coming November and only then will the money will be available for competition. In the meantime, the Commerce Department has been researching what other states have done and once the money is approved, the process will begin. The \$20M state support is only a small fraction of what will be needed, as most innovation centers cost in the area of \$100M. Much like in other states, the \$20M state support will leverage private investment that will carry the lion’s share of the investment. Once a proposal is in place outlining how the institutions of higher education will be involved, it will be brought before the Board of Education for approval.

Member Purtill asked whether Mr. Gallagher had information on who is participating in and what the goal is over the next year or two for the Real Jobs R.I. partnerships, which will reprioritize existing workforce dollars to align training efforts with employer needs. Mr. Gallagher replied that the information is available on the R.I. Department of Labor and Training's website, and that he is excited to report that R.I.'s three Institutions of Higher Education are involved in one or more of the Real Jobs R.I. partnerships, as are 10 CTE programs, Chambers of Commerce, and businesses. These programs were designed to identify and assist those populations that have been traditionally underserved.

Member Howes asked, and Mr. Gallagher confirmed, that general revenue funds were included in the Governor's budget for the existing work emergent program, a very successful program that can be taken to scale and which was expanded this year to CTE students, as well as college students and unemployed adults. The program pays half of the cost for a paid internship with the goal of getting students ready to get the connection and have learning in a context.

Chair Cottam thanked Mr. Gallagher for the thorough account of the Governor's education funding and expressed her gratitude on behalf of students and families who really benefit from Governor Raimondo's commitment to funding public education.

At this time, Chair Cottam announced the arrival of President Dooley and Board Member Duffy.

Next, Chair Cottam introduced the next discussion item and turned it over to Commissioner Wagner.

### **Item 6b - Diploma System - Update**

Commissioner Wagner began by giving a quick context on the Diploma System. He shared that when he came to R.I. last summer and started the work around the diploma system he was really concerned that he was going to spend the next year fighting over tests instead of talking about instruction. He felt that it was really important to him to quickly lower the temperature around testing and instead focus on high-quality teaching and learning. One of the things that was raising the temperature on testing was the current set of graduation requirements, which felt counter-intuitive, too restrictive, and didn't seem to reinforce the kinds of things that should be reinforced, such as advancing the statewide standard while giving options for students, taking seriously the notion of course-based progressions that are based on student interests, and having a strategy around phase-in of safety nets.

He turned the conversation over to Stephen Osborn, Chief of the RIDE Division of Accelerating School Performance, who walked the Board through a presentation on what the engagement has been like with the field around the revisions to the Secondary School Regulations.

He began by stating that when RIDE planned on revising the regulations, it looked at how it could change and shape the regulations to capture what a R.I. graduate should look like as defined in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

He shared a regional comparison of graduation and achievement rates data reflecting all students attending both private and public schools, which recognizes growth in both graduation and participation rates over the last couple of years. The data show that R.I. students are not graduating at the same rate as their counterparts in the other New England States and those who do graduate are not as ready as some of their neighboring peers. Currently one out of three R.I. high school students takes the SAT and only two out of five who take it score at the college and career readiness levels, the lowest regionally.

He discussed the existing graduation requirements and the revision process to shape the regulations going forward; considerations for a future diploma, including proposing the concept of a personalized pathway, allowing a student in his/her first day of high school to design and develop a personalized pathway that helps prepare them with college and career-ready skills that are going to help them be prepared for postsecondary school and success. The other concept being discussed is of an endorsement that a student would earn in addition to receiving a diploma. The concept could mean a student had met a college and career-readiness measure or it could simply mean that a student has prepared at a level of readiness that could speak to colleges and universities.

He then went over the emerging themes heard during the public outreach meetings and the policy challenges to consider:

- The value of the diploma
  - o How do we build and support a diploma system that is meaningful to students, prepares them for the rigors of postsecondary life, and does not merely become a checklist for the student to complete?
  
- Equity within the diploma system
  - o How do we build and support a diploma system that provides for equitable opportunity statewide, while maintaining local flexibility?
  
- Access to the diploma
  - o How do we build and support a diploma system that accounts for the diverse abilities of all learners while maintaining high expectations for all?

Commissioner Wagner interjected and voiced that the policy decision on the access to the diploma and hitting just the right balance in setting a very clear standard on where our students should be is going to be the most challenging. It needs to feel compelling to not only the Board as a policy-making body, but also to people in the field so that they can get behind it, and it needs to be something that doesn't feel as if it's going to be overturned in a future legislative session.

Board Member Duffy asked if Commissioner Wagner could summarize how Massachusetts balances its priorities.

Commissioner Wagner responded that for the past 20 years, Massachusetts has been doing many of the things that he is recommending in his empowerment package, but, much like R.I., many of the other states are struggling to find the right balance on standard-setting decisions.

Mr. Osborn ended the presentation by sharing that the Board needs to consider some policy questions when building and supporting a diploma system that is meaningful to students, provides for equitable opportunity statewide, and accounts for the diverse abilities of all learners while maintaining high expectations for all.

### **Enclosure 6d – School and Family Empowerment - Update**

Commissioner Wagner went over the concept of school and family empowerment, a legislative proposal that he has been introducing publicly over the last several months that will support and amplify the teaching and learning work and take it to the next level. There needs to be a strategy around empowering the people who are closest to the schools and the students, so that they can really take the work and a school to the next level in a way that is based on a shared leadership culture of continuous improvement. Having high standards, empowerment of those closest to the action, building leadership capacity, and having a strategy for innovation will work, but only if, much as Massachusetts has done over the past 20 years, Rhode Island sticks to the plan and stays the course. The school empowerment package is completely voluntary; the application needs local level approval and a buy-in vote by 2/3 of the affected teachers in the school.

Next, Commissioner Wagner talked about the family empowerment piece of the proposal. While empowering schools to have more tools to do what they feel is best to amplify the high-quality teaching work at the school level, there should be the ability for parents to exercise a balancing level of empowerment for their children. Similar to CTE programs that are open to students statewide, the idea is to incentivize other programs and give families the ability to choose a school that best meets the needs of their children.

Commissioner Wagner ended his presentation by stating that what teachers, employers, and families want is pretty well-aligned in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, people who persist through difficulty, and so on - and in 2016 there is an opportunity to align all of what people want in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that will drive our economy and our state.

Member Izzo expressed that, in order for this empowerment strategy to be successful, there needs to be a place to pay very close attention to health, environmental hazards, safe communities, and all of those other critical issues that greatly impact the well-being of children.

## 7. ACTION ITEMS

Prior to asking for a motion, Chair Cottam stated that the Concurrent Enrollment course list was previously discussed that the February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, and more recently at the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education.

She also clarified that this evening the Board was only being asked to approve the Concurrent Enrollment course list and not the course costs, as stipulated in the Dual Enrollment Regulations. The course costs will be approved at the May meeting of the Board.

Phyllis Harnick, Planning Specialist, Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, presented on the Fall 2015 dual and concurrent student enrollment data at the three R.I. Institutions of Higher Education,

### Enclosure 7a – Approval of the Concurrent Enrollment Course List

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

**VOTED:** That, the R.I. Board of Education approves the Concurrent Enrollment Course List from the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island, for Academic Year 2016-2017, as presented.

Vote: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, John Smith, Jr., and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

## 8. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Michael Bernstein and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Barbara Cottam, Amy Beretta, Michael Bernstein,  
Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy, Karin Forbes,  
Jo Eva Gaines, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez,  
Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli,  
John Smith, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.