



**Enclosure 2a**  
**August 7, 2019**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**May 29, 2019**

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

---

The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Wednesday, May 29, 2019, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Cottam welcomed everyone to the quarterly meeting of the R.I. Board of Education, noted for the record that Members Davis and Field had notified her that they would not be joining the meeting, and called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**Present:** Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, \*Christopher Bove, Colleen Callahan, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, \*\*Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, \*\*\*Marianne Monte, Lawrence Purtill, \*Jay Rumas, and Jeffery Williams

\* Ex-officio, non-voting members

\*\* Arrived at 5:53 p.m.

\*\*\* Arrived at 5:55 p.m.

**Absent:**

Karen Davis  
Gara Field  
Mike Grey  
Stephan Pryor

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was

**VOTED:** That, the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of May 29, 2019

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

[Board Members Martinez and Monte arrived after the acceptance of the agenda]

Next, Chair Cottam welcomed Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, to her official first meeting of the Board of Education.

Chair Cottam also acknowledged that Brenda Dann-Messier retired as Commissioner of Postsecondary Education earlier this month, and thanked her for her tireless commitment and contributions to the betterment of public education.

Chair Cottam also introduced Ron Cavallaro, the Council on Postsecondary Education's Chief Legal Counsel for many years, who was recently appointed as the Acting Commissioner of Postsecondary Education.

Lastly, Chair Cottam acknowledged that today's meeting is the last for Christopher Bove, Chair of the PK-12 Student Advisory Council and ex-officio, non-voting member of on the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. Mr. Bove will be studying Political Science in the fall at the University of Rhode Island (URI), and to welcome him, President Dooley presented Mr. Bove with a URI sweatshirt.

Mr. Bove expressed his excitement for joining the URI political science program next year, where he does hope to run for Student Senate. He thanked the members of the Board for taking the time to listen to what he had to say and for helping him do his job representing the student voice across Rhode Island.

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

### **2a. Minutes of the February 23, 2019, Board of Education Meeting**

On a motion duly made by Thomas Izzo and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the February 23, 2019, meeting.

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

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 3

[Members Beretta, DelGiudice, and McConaghy, had to abstain from the vote as they did not attend the February 23, 2019, Meeting of the Board of Education]

[Members Martinez and Monte arrived after the approval of the minutes]

### **2b. Minutes of the March 26, 2019, Board of Education Meeting**

On a motion duly made by Daniel McConaghy and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the March 26, 2019, meeting.

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Daniel McConaghy, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 1

[Member DelGiudice had to abstain from the vote as he did not attend the March 26, 2019, Meeting of the Board of Education]

[Members Martinez and Monte arrived after the approval of the minutes]

### **3. OPEN FORUM**

Andrew Bramson, President and CEO of the College Crusade, reported that on a recent study by Drexel University and reported in the New England Board of Higher Education, students who participate on the College Crusade are 32% more likely, than their peers, to enroll in college.

Member Callahan, a longtime Board Member of the College Crusade, expressed that there is something to be learned from the work that the Crusade engages in and the programs and advisors who enforce academics that help students who are first generation understand the college going process. These are the types of things that should be built all across the schools in our State, as the results speak for themselves.

#### **4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRS**

Chair Cottam began her report by stating that she will defer to the Chairs of the Councils and the Commissioners to report on what is happening in their respective Departments, but took a minute to highlight some of the collective work that is happening between the K-12 and the postsecondary systems since the Board last met.

- President Sanchez and his staff will present on what has been done to date in reinventing Rhode Island College's Education Preparation Program to meet Rhode Island's K-12's demographics and instructional needs, which are rapidly changing.
- Continue the conversation that was started at the February Board meeting when the Board tasked RIDE, OPC and our postsecondary institutions in ensuring that Rhode Island students are academically prepared for college, know how to matriculate into college, transition into college, and persist through, and complete college. Thanks to the collaborative effort by everyone, the state launched what we are calling the PrepareRI College Readiness Project, a partnership between RIDE, OPC, and the postsecondary institutions, to ensure that every student graduates from high school ready to succeed in college.

Chair Cottam thanked everyone for continuing to push forward in this work, and expressed that while there is still work to be done, the team has heard the Board's concerns and the concerns of the broader community, and have worked together to address them through a number of co-created deliverables. The next phase of this project will be scaling up this summer around developing a plan for improving our students' academic readiness – the true heart of this work.

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

Chair McConaghy reported that on May 20, RIDE announced \$3,077,472 in annual grant awards to 16 organizations that provide high-quality after-school and summer programs for students. This program is federally funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, and, contingent on continued funding, grant recipients will receive funds for the next five years, totaling more than \$15 million in support.

He also reported that earlier this month, RIDE launched the Educator Course Network (ECN) Platform, a new resource that aims to help district leaders become more informed consumers of professional learning to look for new ways to engage educators in learning opportunities that most closely meet collective and individual needs. The Educator Course Network providers cover a range of academic content areas, as well as leadership development, coaching, and support for multilingual learners to name a few.

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

Chair DelGiudice began his report by thanking Board members who participated in the recent commencement ceremonies. He praised the three public institutions of postsecondary education for the great work surrounding the unique commencement activities leading up to commencement day.

Chair DelGiudice also report that Ron Cavallaro will be serving as the Acting Commissioner for Postsecondary Education while a national search for a permanent Commissioner is underway.

Lastly, Chair DelGiudice reported that recently CCRI was the host to an Articulation Transfer Summit, an annual event where over 100 professionals get together to work on this very important topic.

**Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Commissioner Infante-Green began by sharing that since being appointed Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, she has visited 19 schools and is very excited for the opportunity to talk educators, students, union and school leaders. She has also met with key stakeholder groups as she wants to be in front of as many partners as she possibly can before the end of the school year.

She also reported that she has spent much time at the State House getting to know the legislative leadership and has testified before Senate Finance. She plans to continue to make connections with policymakers and other state agency leaders to discuss RIDE's need to change and evolve, as she sees the need for the agency to change focus, shift, and pivot in terms the work that it does and the areas that staff spend most of their time in. The agency will go from compliance, technical assistance, to actually support, which requires a different kind of focus. She is very excited about the fact that Rhode Islanders have pride in their neighborhoods and would like them to feel that same pride about the education system.

Lastly, Commissioner Infante-Green reported on the focus that RIDE has on Providence and how before her arrival in Rhode Island, she had spoken with Governor Raimondo and Mayor Elorza about having a Review team. Last week the Review team visited schools, the district's administrative offices, and met with the City Council and School Board. She noted that the issues in Providence are decades in the making and expressed her disappointment with the fact that only 14 percent of Providence students can read at grade level and only 10 percent can do math at grade level, with some schools performing at only one percent. She stressed that cannot be the bar - students and communities deserve better. The Review team's report is not to finger point, but rather to let us know where we are and where we have to go. The Review team will not be giving recommendations, but rather a status of where the system is. Recommendations will come afterwards. It is sobering and a call for action.

**Commissioner of Postsecondary Education**

Mr. Cavallaro expressed that he is excited and honored to have been chosen to be the “temporary” Acting Commissioner and that he only took the job because the higher education system means a lot to him. He noted that Commissioner Dann-Messier set quite the high bar for the office and left some very large shoes to fill, but he knows that the staff is able and hardworking, and with that he knows that the important work of the office will continue uninterrupted during the interim period until a new Commissioner is appointed. Over the last few days his main focus has been on efficiencies within the office’s operation, which has included laying the groundwork for the move of the office back to Providence. This change will no doubt assist in the ongoing collaboration within OPC and RIDE and will give the staff at both departments the opportunity to extend their collaborative efforts, which assists students transition into postsecondary education and achieve success when there.

**5. DISCUSSION ITEMS****a. Education Preparation Program at RI College (RIC)- Update**

Prior to turning the conversation over to Drs. Pearlmutter, Horwitz, and August, of the School of Education, Dr. Frank Sanchez, RIC’s President, gave some context of the evening’s conversation. He shared that over the last 24 months RIC began to reimagine not only its teacher preparation program, but the entire school of education. With the primary goal of really training highly competitive graduates for teaching jobs anywhere in Rhode Island and in the nation, the college looked at how to transform the entire school of education and deeply looked at the curriculum and really modernizing it to better prepare the future teachers of Rhode Island.

Dr. August began the presentation by sharing that this evening the college will be highlighting some of the work that, in collaboration with RIDE over the last two years, has done to redesign almost 30 new teacher preparation programs. She shared some of the test pass rates and stressed that although teacher preparation is not the only answer, it can play a major role in addressing the needs of Rhode Island students. She highlighted that the average Rhode Island score is equivalent to the lowest 10% score in the state of Massachusetts.

To address the areas of concern that arose in the 2016 RIDE report as part of RIDE’s program approval visit, it became essential that as part of the redesign, the Feinstein School of Education needed to commit to preparing all graduates with:

1. Focus on Social Justice and Equity – adopted a textbook on diversity and social justice that will be introduced to students in the first year and that they will keep it throughout their entire four years as they journey through their teacher prep program;
2. Deep Content Knowledge – deep collaboration with the arts and sciences departments;
3. Extensive Clinical Practice – students will be in the schools from day one learning how to observe and what to look at all the way up to practice teaching – working toward one year student teaching plus 60 hours prior to that;

4. Required Courses in Special Education or English as a Second Language - to address students with special needs and emergent bilinguals - all teacher candidates will take coursework in special education and in TESOL and an additional course to build on that.

Next, Dr. Horwitz went over the design process grounded in continuous improvement - looking at data at multiple levels and as a unit, and at programs to make sure that the college continues to improve and lead what is happening in the field. She shared that in order to be able to engage in this continuous improvement, the college has worked with individuals inside and outside of the School of Education, with many external partners, with national experts, and with students. She highlighted that the school has been collaborating with RIAACTE, an organization made up of all the deans and directors of all of the other schools of education, private and public, statewide, who have been instrumental over the last two years in a lot of the changes happening.

She also went over where the school has been, where it is going, the hiring of a new Dean, the preparation for RIDE's April 2020 approval visit, and the announcement of the new Horace Mann Hall coming in 2022.

The presentation ended with the introduction of Dr. Jeannine Dingus-Eason, the new Dean of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD), who will be starting this coming August.

Dr. Dingus-Eason expressed that she is more than excited to take on the leadership of the FSEHD at RI College. She shared that the decision to take on this role was an easy one for her as she looked at the profile of Dr. Sanchez, the ability to interact with Provost Pearlmutter, and the amazing job that Co-Deans August and Horwitz have done in redesigning 30 programs in a period of 24 months. She highlighted that one of the things that drew her to this position, was the college leadership and the change in demographics in the State of Rhode Island. Her previous work at the high school level, at the community college level, and her research interest on Black Women Teachers' Pedagogy and the recruitment of those teachers, has been on issues that are being talked about in Rhode Island - equity and excellence. She ended by expressing that the work ahead is a heavy and challenging lift, but the foundation has been built, and she is ready to step in to lead and learn. This is an opportunity to create teachers that are culturally responsive and can go into any classroom and be able to produce children that are able to emerge with fond memories of schooling and able to emerge with a skillset that they can contribute, not only to their families' wellbeing, but also to the wellbeing of generations to come.

Board Members applauded the considerable amount of work that RIC has accomplished over the last two years, and discussed:

- The need for the teacher preparation programs to address trauma and mental health, which is the number one issue facing students today;

- The need for the college to reach out to some of the high-performing charter schools to see what has been successful, and incorporate that into the college's teacher preparation program;
- The college's plan to continue to engage and involve the field as the new system is rolled-out;
- The college's plan to proactively address the stunning lack of diversity in the teaching workforce, which is something that has been discussed time and time again, with no results.
- The possibility of having a read across Rhode Island day for educators with discussion groups on social justice and equity.
- The need to have a parallel track that not only focuses on the undergraduate programs, but on the graduate programs as well.
- The importance of having the future teachers of Rhode Island prepared to educate students with disabilities and English learners.
- The need to ensure that workplaces have a culture where the workforce that the colleges are producing can truly express what they have learned, as workplaces often dictate how people behave when they get there, regardless of the intention they brought in when they came. This is an emerging discussion that has been happening in the workforce development side of things.

#### **b. PrepareRI College Readiness Project – Status Update**

Commissioner Infante-Green introduced the topic by sharing that as an educator who is new to Rhode Island, she finds it exciting to see this level of collaboration across RIDE and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. This is a unique opportunity for the State to improve college-ready outcomes for students; an area that needs much improvement. She shared that every high school in Rhode Island was contacted by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and RIDE about their FAFSA completion efforts and to share the tools that have been developed for those efforts over the last three months. Representatives from RIDE along with representatives from the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and the College Provosts will be meeting at the end of June to align on the statewide plan for an academic intervention strategy, to be developed jointly over the summer. She thanked Chair Cottam and Board Members for allowing the flexibility and encouragement to improve our outcomes at a systems level.

Steve Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Innovation, went over what has emerged over the last six months:

- Cross-agency leaders convened – November 2018
- Implemented the Readiness Plan in February – May 2019
- Implemented the Academic Readiness Pilot – August 2019 – June 2020
- Readiness Project plan drafted – December 2018
- Development of Academic Readiness Pilot – June – July 2019



Work streams and deliverables:

- Readiness
  - Academic readiness (math, reading, and writing) – ensuring that all students are graduating high school and arriving at college ready; and
  - Alignment of requirements – ensuring that students know which courses to take in high school to be able to enroll in college
- Matriculation – CTE credentials for college credit and FAFSA
- Communications – Communication and major-aligned college credit

Progress to date:

- Two-part plan created, which includes conversations over the summer with K-12 teachers and postsecondary faculty to understand how to navigate the postsecondary systems as each of the three public institutions of postsecondary education is radically different in terms of how their academics operate;
- Created a very clear document that will be shared publicly, which crosswalks high school graduation requirements in Rhode Island with the enrollment requirements at each of the three public institutions of postsecondary education;
- Date set for a meeting to bring together postsecondary administrators, faculty, OPC, and RIDE to prioritize and identify CTE college credentials;
- FAFSA is currently at 64% completion, six percentage points about completion last year, and launched the first-ever student and school level dashboards in Rhode Island;
- College eGuide, which aims to pull together frequently asked questions, is geared towards students and families and is ready to be published on feedback is received from key stakeholders, including the three public institutions for postsecondary education;
- Major-aligned college credit from middle to high school, to every guided pathway, career cluster, and major at every public college, and aligned to relevant wage data.

Mr. Osborn turned the presentation to the education leaders at the three public institutions of postsecondary education to share some of the partnerships and initiatives that they have been working on with RIDE and the K-12 system.

Dr. Costigan, Vice President for Academic Affairs at CCRI, shared that articulation agreements, which outline credit award for courses taught at high schools, had been dormant for a few years, but have been revived. This spring, CCRI reached out to high schools to had previous articulation agreements with the college and 26 applications were received, and 25 of them were renewed. Seventy-five new requests for articulation agreements have been received from area high schools, which will take much of the upcoming school year for the different departments to do an expert review.

Dr. Pearlmutter, Interim Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs at RI College, shared that in this regard, RIC focused on two items – Roadmaps for every major, which provide the internal pathways for students applying as freshmen. The college is in the process of updating all of them for all of the new curricula that just went through the curriculum committee. In addition, RIC is looking at the ways in which to provide supplemental instruction or offer an additional course to incoming freshmen, as some students in laboratory courses are claiming that they are not prepared for the expectations of those courses. The college is also working with the high schools to increase what they are doing to prepare students for college success. The other thing that RIC has undertaken is looking at the map that RIDE provided and mapped all of the majors to the pathway endorsement areas in the advanced course work. There are 119 majors mapped to the RIDE expectations. The School of Education has also completely redone its technology education program, which had not been updated for over a decade.

Dr. Libutti, Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Rhode Island (URI), reported that with respect to communications and readiness, the one thing that URI does annually is hold a feedback group meeting with all of RI's high school guidance counselors to reflect about what the university is seeing, what is experiencing, discuss new programs, and what guidance counselors should expect. Another successful thing that the university will be doing is meet with certain high schools when they start seeing things that may not be aligned either at the high school or at the university level to discuss what they are seeing at the admissions process and what some new trends are. URI is also launching a collaboration with Cranston East and Cranston West to look at math education at the readiness levels of algebra, pre-calculus and calculus. He ended by noting that one out of every three students entering URI this fall, will have earned college credit from high school, an increase of two to four percent each year, which helps students graduate college early.

Next, Spencer Sherman, RIDE's Director of College and Career Readiness, presented on the Academic Readiness Plan, one of the work stream deliverables, and pointed out that there are two distinct strategies to improve academic readiness:

- A short-term plan - Ensure that when students show up to college in the fall there are some remediation strategies in place. Over the summer working groups will be meeting to review data, identify national best practices, and develop a plan, so students can start credit-bearing course work when they arrive at college; and
- Long-term plan - This summer there will be a launch of an early warning system, which has not been live for a number of years, so that high school students, administrators, and counselors, can detect which students are not on track for credit-bearing coursework in college and remediate them while they are still in the early grades of high school.

Mr. Sherman also went over the alignment of requirements and stated that high school diploma requirements and postsecondary admission requirements, are not aligned in Rhode Island. He shared that a one-page document has been developed, which will be shared with guidance counselors and families, detailing which credits and coursework are needed for students to be able to enroll at any of the public institutions of postsecondary education. He also went over the

Career and Technical Education (CTE) credentials for college credit. He explained that this is an excellent pathway for students, which has had tremendous growth (60% growth over the past two-years) with every single school district in Rhode Island, except for two, currently having CTE programs. A stakeholders meeting will be held next month to outline the best way to engage college faculty on partnerships moving forward to map credentials to college credit.

Dr. Paula Szulc, Associate Commissioner for Student Success, Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), reported on the FAFSA completion initiative that OPC is leading, which is a subset of the overall FAFSA initiative. OPC has been heavily engaged in working with adults to make them aware of the fact that financial readiness is also a very important part of participation in postsecondary education to ensure that all Rhode Islanders that are to access federal and state financial aid are aware of this. Two important tools have been put into place that make this information readily available – overall accounting of where each district resides in terms of FAFSA completion, and providing guidance counselors with student level information about FAFSA completion.

Next, Mr. Sherman went over the PrepareRI College eGuide, which is a simple guidebook for students, so that they know what they have to do to get to college. This has been a coordinated effort, with input from a number of stakeholders across the state that do this work well.

Mr. Sherman ended the presentation by sharing that with the dramatic increase in the number of college credits that high school students are earning, which has more than doubled over the last few years, there is the need to make certain that those credits are not random, but are aligned to actual college majors. To that end, the team has mapped the educational path from middle school, to high school, to college, to career, and how they map to particular majors in college campuses.

Board Members expressed the need to:

- Make available to students and families a list of all of the requirements needed to attend college, as well as the different programs that are available to them;
- Develop a financial aid, FAFSA like form, that does not get reported to the federal government, for high-achieving, undocumented students, who have DACA status and who want to attend college and cannot afford it;
- Get as many students college-ready, but to keep in mind that the goal of 20 percent of our students will not just be proficient, but perform at the highest level and exceed expectations, as proficiency will not get a student into a top-tier university. The progress on that goal never seems to get reported to this Board.
- Implement a universal public school SAT prep program, which can make-up a lot of lost ground and help a lot of students – if we are paying for it, we should prepare them.
- Include guidance counselors in these collaborative conversations.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Daniel McConaghy and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was

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

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

**YEAS:** Amy Beretta, Barbara Cottam, Colleen Callahan, Timothy DelGiudice, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, Marianne Monte, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.