



**Enclosure 2a  
May 23, 2023**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
February 21, 2023**

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

---

Chair DiCenso welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. She declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**Present:** Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, \*Charles Curci, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

**Absent:**

(\*Ex-officio, non-voting member)

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

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

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the February 21, 2023, meeting

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

**YEAS:** Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Michael Almeida, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023, meeting

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 2

(Members Callahan and Gaines recused themselves as they did not attend the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting)

### 3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by sharing an update regarding engagement around the revised Secondary Regulations, which were the most commented-on set of regulations in Rhode Island K-12 history. She noted that the commitment to community engagement did not end with the Council's approval but continued as RIDE works on implementation and the detailed 6-year Action Plan. She added that the regulations have garnered national attention as education systems around the country look to rebuild and reimagine high school. RIDE has detailed this collaborative process in stories that have run in various national publications, including *the 74*, *Education Week*, *Hechinger Report*, and the *Boston Globe*. She also mentioned that February is Black History Month, and we should be reflecting on the persistent need for systemic changes to our education system to ensure equity for our students, including Black and Brown learners in marginalized communities. She stated that successful implementation of the Secondary Regulations is part of the work to ensure equity in education. Additionally, the data from the partnership with XQ Institute showed that some of our most vulnerable students were deeply impacted by the previous regulations.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green reported that she joined U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, Lt. Governor Sabina Matos, national and local leaders, professionals, students, and elected officials for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dominicans on the Hill event in Washington, D.C., where she spoke about the revised graduation requirements. She mentioned that this gathering is held every year during Dominican Independence Month, to recognize the growing civic engagement of the Dominican-American community.

Commissioner Infante-Green continued her report sharing news from East Greenwich. East Greenwich High School's Anne-Marie Flaherty is Rhode Island's School Counselor of the Year. RIDE called public attention to the unique contribution of our school counselors, and RIDE's commitment to lowering the counselor-to-student ratio. She noted that School Social Work Week will also be highlighted on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

Lastly, she noted that February is Career & Technical Education (CTE) Month as well. The number of students in CTE programs has increased 192% in the last seven years. The Commissioner added that RIDE's programs are innovative. For example, Providence Public Schools has introduced firefighter training, CNA certification, and CCRI dual enrollment courses for P-Tech students. She mentioned that Cranston is the home of the only aquaculture program. Their pre-engineering and robotics program is one that should be replicated in other LEAs. She added that program founder and lead teacher Ed Spidell has been inspiring students for nearly 40 years and leading students to the national stage that includes SkillsUSA competitions. Finally, she mentioned that RIDE will be releasing CTE grants to help make sure all students benefit from coursework aligned to high-skill, high-growth careers, which is supported with Perkins V set-aside funds.

Commissioner Infante-Green thanked everyone and turned the meeting back to Chair DiCenso.

#### **4. OPEN FORUM**

One individual addressed the Council, and 193 written comments were submitted.

#### **5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **a. Providence Facilities**

Chair DiCenso turned it over to Providence Public School District's (PPSD) Superintendent Montañez. Superintendent Montañez greeted everyone and acknowledged that it was his first day back in person after recovering from surgery. He expressed his excitement about continuing the work and discussing the much-needed improvements to the Providence school buildings. He noted that PPSD has three thousand fewer students than five years ago and is on pace to be down another three thousand by the end of this decade, thus does not need as many school buildings. He added that he and the PPSD team would be updating everyone on the ongoing support that was being provided to families and staff at Broad Street and Lauro Elementary Schools.

Deputy Superintendent of Operations Zack Scott walked through the support that PPSD has been providing to the families, students, and staff at Broad Street and Lauro over the past few months to ensure a smooth transition for the fall.

Members Almeida, Callahan, and Barden raised concerns about the process in which the school closures occurred. Discussion between Chair Dicenso, members Almeida, Barden, Beretta, Callahan, and Gaines, PPSD, and the Commissioner took place around the process that occurred and steps that can be taken moving forward.

## **b. Social Studies Standards**

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting to Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella who announced that the Commissioner would be providing opening remarks on the Social Studies Standards.

Commissioner Infante-Green shared that the Fordham Institute released its State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History. Reviews were conducted by a bipartisan team of veteran educators and subject-matter experts and Rhode Island received low marks. She added that in 2019, new legislation required high-quality standards for various content areas. Together with a team of educators, RIDE began a thorough review of the current Social Studies Grade Span Expectations. Additionally, RIDE conducted a statewide survey and received responses with suggestions for improvement to the standards. This process included various opportunities for community members to help refine the proposal. She added that RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Foehr, and Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Phyllis Lynch, will share further details about the process. These standards serve as a strong framework for curriculum and instruction and will ensure our students receive a well-rounded social studies education.

Chief of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Foehr began the presentation on the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards by providing a summary on the revision timeline and goals. She explained that the team reviewed other aspects of our standards by reviewing other state standards, national standards, curriculum, and progressions and trends prepared by Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). She explained in detail the Anchor and Content Standards that make up the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards. Director Lynch provided information on stakeholder engagement and public input on the standards and implementation of the standards. She also explained RIDE's responses to those suggestions. Additionally, she discussed the timeline for implementation from 2022-2027.

## **c. Trauma-Informed Commission Appointments**

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Associate Director Rosemary Reilly-Chammat to present information on the Rhode Island Trauma-Informed Schools Commission. Ms. Reilly-Chammat shared that the Trauma Informed Schools Act was signed into law, RIGL 16-21-41, in June 2022, consisting of twelve members, seven of whom were mandated by statute. She explained the role of the Commission and the process in which they were selected. Applicants were scored on proximity to the work, their diverse experience, experience with vulnerable/diverse populations, and content knowledge. Once selected, the Rhode Island Trauma-Informed Commission is charged with conducting a review and assessment of existing trauma-informed schools and community-based resources and initiatives across the state. Additionally, as part of their role, they must inform the development of a trauma-informed school implementation plan and supporting materials to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. Finally, the commission will be tasked with researching, identifying, and cataloging state, federal and philanthropic sources that align with this work.

**6. ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. New England Laborers/Cranston Public Schools Construction & Career Academy Charter Amendment**

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 Approves the proposed major amendment request from the New England Laborers/Cranston Public School Construction and Career Academy to a.) change the name of the school to Apprenticeship Exploration School, and b.) to expand programming beyond the construction field, including but not limited to event planning and tourism, and open more apprenticeship opportunities as presented:

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

**YEAS:** Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSTAINS:** 0

**b. Endorsement of Social Studies Standards**

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education endorses the 2023 Rhode Island Social Studies Standards as presented:

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

**c. Approval of Trauma Informed Commission Appointments**

On a motion duly made by Karen Davis and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education appoint the members of the Trauma Informed Schools Commission as presented:

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

**7. ADJOURNMENT:**

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

**VOTED:** That the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Adjourns

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

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,

Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martiez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.