



Enclosure 2a
June 20, 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
May 23, 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 5:36 p.m.

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

Absent:

(*Ex-officio, non-voting member)

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 May 23, 2023, meeting

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary approve the minutes of the February 21, 2023, meeting

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green began her report by sharing that RIDE launched a three-million-dollar Wellness in Education Leads to Learning Initiative which will provide between \$100,000-150,000 for school districts to create or expand wellness spaces for students and educators including mental, physical, social, and emotional wellness. She thanked the School Building Authority and the Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports for their collaboration on this work. She also congratulated Jamestown School Department and East Providence High School for being named 2023 United States Green Ribbon Schools. She also noted that Rhode Island is number one in the northeast for Green Ribbon Schools.

Next, Commissioner Infante-Green discussed the Statewide Job Fair. She mentioned that more than 430 candidates joined over the course of the two-day event located at the Crowne Plaza. Candidates engaged with more than 40 LEAs, higher education institutions, transportation, and food service providers. Close to 90 individuals were interviewed on the spot. She thanked Chief Lisa Foehr and RIDE's teaching and learning team for all their hard work.

Commissioner Infante-Green went on to speak about extended learning. She mentioned that Summer and Fall registration for the All Course Network is open and listed a few courses. Some of these courses include introduction to coding, health careers, farm-to-table cooking, planning your financial future, and cybersecurity fundamentals. She added that this is just one of many efforts to ramp up high-quality, out-of-school learning opportunities for our students. RIDE has invested millions to help schools build partnerships with community-based organizations, proven to improve student outcomes. These efforts are matched by Governor McKee's Learn365RI push, working with municipal leaders to expand out-of-school learning. She mentioned that this evening, Governor McKee's Director of Policy Elizabeth Winangun was here to share information regarding a proposal that will help expand access to year-round learning opportunities.

Commissioner Infante-Green also discussed accountability. She noted that for the first time, RIDE issued LEA/district accountability results as required by the Education Accountability Act of 2019. These new interactive snap shots allow school leaders and families to easily understand how their school community is doing. She added that the data provided by the LEA Accountability system will also be critical for identifying priorities and refining LEA Strategic Plans, ESSER Plans, and Consolidated Resource Program Plans.

Commissioner Infante-Green also provided an update on ESSER funds. She explained that the first wave of ESSER funds from the CARES Act has been completely spent, and LEAs are making headway with strategic, intentional investments with ESSER 2 and ESSER 3. She added that RIDE will continue to work with district leaders to ensure that these funds are invested in areas that will best meet the needs of our students.

Lastly, Commissioner Infante-Green took a moment to acknowledge Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month.

4. OPEN FORUM

Five individuals addressed the Council, and 1 written comment was submitted.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Pre-K Special Education, PPSD Update

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Superintendent Javier Montañez. Providence Public School District's (PPSD) Superintendent Montañez began by stating that PPSD is excited to announce that they have awarded 174 seals of biliteracy to seniors in ten different languages including four seals in trilateracy. He added that the district is preparing for summer and currently has over three thousand students who have registered for summer learning. He noted that the district is also adopting a literacy first program and in partnering with Scholastic books will be providing all students with ten books and a backpack at the end of the year so that they can continue to read throughout the summer. He expressed his concern regarding Pre-K seats and ensuring that appropriate staff will be available. He introduced Dr. Jennifer Connolly to speak to that concern.

Dr. Connolly began her presentation on the Providence Public Schools providing an update on the differently abled Pre-K population. She identified the goals which include prioritizing the needs of differently-abled Pre-K students and ensuring that all differently abled Pre-K students receive legally mandated services. She went on to explain in detail the challenges that the district is experiencing. These challenges include the growing need for special education Pre-K seats, children have received little to no early intervention services due to the pandemic, hiring quality of teachers, and the cost per student. She also discussed options that are being considered for classroom seats for the increase in pending referrals, and the steps already taken thus far to close that gap. Lastly, she discussed next steps which include determining an option, the logistical planning of that choice, and communication to parents and students impacted.

Members of the Council asked questions related to the children currently enrolled and the impact of new enrollment as well as the staffing concerns on the potential increase in enrollment. All concerns were addressed by Dr. Connolly and RIDE.

b. Learn 365 RI

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting to Policy Director from the Office of the Governor, Elizabeth Winangun. Ms. Winangun discussed Governor McKee's new out-of-school learning initiative, "Learn365RI" ("L365") which is designed to shift learning from the traditional one hundred and eighty days to three hundred sixty-five days of learning by supporting partnerships between municipalities, LEAs and community-based organizations (CBOs) to expand high-quality, after-school learning experiences. She added that as part of L365, the Governor has asked every municipal leader in the state to sign a Municipal Compact and is requesting that the Council endorse L365 and authorize the Commissioner to support the plan.

c. Central Falls School Board

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to RIDE's Chief Strategy Officer, Brian Darrow. Mr. Darrow provided a brief background on the Central Falls Board of Trustees and explained that the members are nominated by the Commissioner of Education and appointed by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. He noted that in March 2023, RIDE was notified that five Board of Trustee seats would become vacant effective June 30, 2023. To ensure a transparent, collaborative, and inclusive nomination process, the Commissioner formed a joint search committee to lead an application process and submit recommendations to the Commissioner. The joint search committee was made up of representatives from the Governor's office, Central Falls Mayor's Office, RIDE, the Board of Trustees, and Central Falls families. A total of thirty-eight applications were received, sixteen of which were invited to interviews and five recommended as finalists. The nominees to the Central Falls School Board of Trustees are Renee Gomes, Felicia Levasseur, Annette Martinez, Carol Pagan, Kyle Quadros, and Thomas Evans. He added that RIDE is also recommending the reappointment of the existing Board of Trustees members, Andrew Bramson and Hugo Figueroa.

d. Right to Read Regulations

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to RIDE's Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella who introduced RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning Lisa Foehr, and Director of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum Dr. Phyllis Lynch. Ms. Foehr began the presentation by providing a brief background on the Right to Read Act. She then explained the impact the regulations would have on instruction.

The regulations would allow enhanced teacher knowledge in how reading works, offer a deepened understanding of the subskills of reading and provide equitable access to evidence-based reading instruction.

She discussed the timeline of which the requirements of the Right to Read Act must be met. She also provided information on funding allocated to the regulations, preliminary data from LEAs and feedback from engagement before and after public comment.

She noted that the next steps include seeking final approval from the Council and providing updated guidance and support to LEAs. Council members raised questions regarding funding and the requirements to meet the deadline. All questions and concerns were answered by Ms. Foehr and Dr. Lynch.

e. Updated Certification Tests

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella who introduced RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Foehr and Director of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, Gina Masiello. Ms. Foehr began the presentation by stating that the regulations governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island require the Commissioner to recommend assessments and minimum scores for approval by the Council on an annual basis. Ms. Masiello explained the proposed testing changes and recommended cut scores which were established through a multi-state standard-setting study conducted in January and February 2023.

f. LEA Accountability & Improvements

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Kelvin Roldán to frame the discussion. He began by addressing the fact that in 2019 the legislature passed the Education Accountability Act, (EAA) that comes with a set of demands for RIDE and LEAs. RIDE has been providing guidance, support, and training to LEAs in RI. He provided an overview of the responsibilities of the offices at RIDE and accomplishments that have been carried out. Deputy Roldán introduced RIDE's Director of School and District Improvement, Kristen Danusis and Director of Data and Technology Services, Scott Gausland. Mr. Gausland began by discussing the purpose and benefits of LEA accountability. He went on to explain how the report card relates to accountability and what measures RIDE uses to evaluate LEA performance. He noted the impact the pandemic had on student performance and offered results from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. He discussed a few district examples of the chart and explained the information displayed.

Ms. Danusis continued the presentation discussing using accountability to drive improvement and creating strategic planning supports.

She explained that the goals of the system were to create a system that allows RIDE and LEAs to meet the EAA requirements and achieve a list of items that were included. She added that they have visited over 40 LEAs across the state to unpack the data with their teams. She noted that the next steps for the LEAs is to take that data and build a plan that addresses their individual school needs.

She noted that the Strategic Planning System was designed based on feedback and input from multiple constituents over a three-year period. She added that RIDE has developed resources to meet the requirements of the EAA and to support LEAs in their improvement planning based upon input and feedback from the field. Lastly, she discussed the accomplishments of implementation of site-based management, accountability, strategic planning, and improvement.

g. School Building Approvals, Necessity of School Construction, Pay-as-you-go Equity Adjustment, Inside Out Grants

Chair DiCenso turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella, who introduced RIDE’s Chief of Operations Mario Carreño. Mr. Carreño provided an overview and brief description of the projects that are being done after the necessity of school construction approvals. He continued the presentation discussing a pay-go equity adjustment for Woonsocket explaining that the pay-as-you-go formula provides 15% upfront funding to LEAs based on the size of approval. He noted that between 2018 and 2021, every district was offered pay-as-you-go funding. Since the City of Woonsocket does not have any bonding capacity, their project will not advance without the State support. Next, Mr. Carreño spoke about the Learning Inside Out Grant - Outdoor Classroom Initiative. This grant will create and enhance a variety of different outdoor space types. He noted that this opportunity was widely embraced by LEAs across the state.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Approval of Executive Director for the RI School for the Deaf

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 recommendation of Sarah McGaughey as the director for the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, as presented.

Vote: 7 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,

Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Approval of the Central Falls School Board

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 the recommendation to appoint Renee Gomes, Felicia Levasseur, Annette Martinez, Carol Pagan, Kyle Quadros, and Thomas Evens to the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees, to re-appoint Andrew Bramson and Hugo Figueroa to the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees, and to appoint Andrew Bramson as Acting Chair and Hugo Figueroa as Acting Vice-Chair to the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees, as presented.

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

c. Approval of Right to Read Regulations

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 the Right to Read Act Regulations, as presented.

Vote: 7 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,

Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

d. Approval of Updated Certification Tests

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the changes to certification tests, as presented.

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

e. Approval of Necessity of School Construction: The Greene School

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$18,543,416 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when the applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$5,563,025, which includes \$1,184,924 in pay-as-you-go funding):

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Approval of Necessity of School Construction: North Providence

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 approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$124,809,195 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when the applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$74,713,500, which includes \$15,889,684 in pay-as-you-go funding):

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Approval of Necessity of School Construction: West Warwick

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$10,895,100 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when the applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$7,155,444 which includes \$1,073,317 in pay-as-you-go funding):

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Approval of Necessity of School Construction: Woonsocket

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 approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$100,212,584 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when the applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$86,480,654 which includes \$12,972,098 in pay-as-you-go funding):

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

f. Approval of Pay-as-you-go Equity Adjustment

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve a one-time adjustment for Pay-As-You-Go funding to be offered to projects approved at the May 23, 2023 Council meeting in the amount of \$59,000,000 for Woonsocket.

Vote: 7 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, Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

g. Approval of Inside Out Grants

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Mary Barden, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the allocation of \$7,504,769 of the Fiscal Year 2023 SBA Capital Fund

Beacon Charter School	\$80,356
Burrillville	\$83,000
Central Falls	\$400,000
Chariho	\$99,634
Compass	\$100,000
East Greenwich	\$200,000
East Providence	\$145,000
Exeter West Greenwich	\$169,718
Foster	\$100,000
Foster-Glocester	\$300,000
Glocester	\$82,838
Greene School	\$200,000
Highlander Charter School	\$100,000
International Charter School	\$100,000
Jamestown	\$100,000
Kingston Hill Academy	\$100,000
Lincoln	\$85,000
New Shoreham	\$100,000
Newport	\$132,250
North Kingstown	\$147,963
Pawtucket	\$99,200
Portsmouth	\$6,310
Providence	\$2,600,000
Segue Institute of Learning	\$141,500
Smithfield	\$141,000
South Kingstown	\$291,000
The Learning Community	\$100,000
Warwick	\$700,000
West Warwick	\$100,000
LEA AWARD SUBTOTAL	\$7,004,769

Vote: 7 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,

Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. ADJOURNMENT:

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

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

Vote: 7 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,
Patricia DiCenso, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martiez

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.