



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
October 24, 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 5:33 p.m.

Present: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell, *Christian Ramos

*Ex-officio, member

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the October 24, 2023, meeting

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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 approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023,

meeting

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green initiated her report by extending a warm greeting to all and expressing gratitude for their presence. She began by addressing the subject of RICAS and indicated that a more detailed presentation would follow later in the evening. However, she wanted to offer high-level information about the results. Initially, she expressed gratitude to the families, teachers, support staff, administrators, and school leaders who exerted considerable effort to facilitate the progress of our students. While acknowledging that there is still a considerable amount of work ahead, she conveyed optimism about the future based on the latest scores. She noted that the recent statewide RICAS results indicate a robust momentum, marked by a rise in participation, a second consecutive year of notable growth in Math, and an increase in proficiency in English Language Arts. She pointed out that when comparing Rhode Island to Massachusetts, there was a more substantial increase in scores for both content areas overall.

Moving on to the next item in her report, Commissioner Infante-Green discussed the WaterFire event. She thanked Governor McKee, members of the Council, school leaders, and community partners who joined the WaterFire event to celebrate excellence among educators. She noted that it was a great honor to not only recognize our teachers with awards but also light their torches beside Rhode Island State Teacher of the Year, Aimee Couto.

Next, she acknowledged the two teachers who were recently honored with Milken Educator Awards which are known as the Oscars of Teaching and include a \$25,000 gift. She acknowledged Malaree Shields, a science teacher at North Kingstown High School, and Paige Leddy at Richmond Elementary School.

Commissioner Infante-Green reminded everyone that RIDE had officially launched educate401.org noting that the website is an online recruitment and resource hub for current and prospective

educators which highlights the best of Rhode Island. It also offers a clear and user-friendly certification roadmap that guides aspiring teachers through the process of becoming certified. She added that from application requirements to professional development opportunities, Educate401 is an invaluable tool for anyone considering a career in education.

Subsequently, she thanked everyone who reached out to congratulate her on the recent appointment to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) by Secretary Cardona. She noted that NAGB sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which is also known as the Nation's Report Card. She highlighted her sense of honor and deep appreciation for Secretary Cardona's confidence in her to serve the country in this capacity. She expressed anticipation for collaborating with leaders from across the nation to bolster the ongoing success of the Nation's Report Card, a crucial resource for enhancing education.

Lastly, Commissioner Infante-Green provided the Council with an update on virtual learning plans. She noted that since the Council delegated its authority in July to approve virtual instructional day plans for use by LEAs in the event of inclement weather or other emergency, 16 LEAs have approved virtual plans while another 4 LEA plans are under review. She thanked everyone and turned the meeting over to Chair DiCenso.

4. OPEN FORUM

No individuals addressed the Council.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. 2023 Assessment Results

Commissioner Infante-Green commenced the discussion with her opening statements. She offered a concise overview of the persistent impacts of the pandemic and highlighted the 2030 performance metrics outlined by the Governor to engage and mobilize stakeholders in supporting schools to enhance student outcomes. Additionally, she drew attention to the Rhode Island state assessments and provided supporting data on student participation in the state and the percentage of students proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math on RICAS, Science on the Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA), and ELA and Math on the SAT. Following her remarks, she redirected the attention to the team, comprising Deputy Commissioner of Instructional Programs Lisa Odom-Villella, Chief of Teaching and Learning Lisa Foehr, State Strategy & Student Opportunity Officer Stephen Osborn, and Director of Student, Community & Academic Supports David Sienko.

Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella presented a summary of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) providing data on ELA and Math performance. The

presentation included the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations categorized by race, ethnicity, and subgroup.

Stephen Osborn proceeded to discuss the PSAT and SAT data in ELA and Math, presenting information on the percentage of students tested, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations, and the benchmarks for college and career readiness. He also shared data on the percentage of students categorized by race, ethnicity, and subgroup.

Deputy Commissioner Odom-Villella conveyed data on the NCSA, encompassing participation rates, statewide performance levels, and the percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations. This information was further broken down by race, ethnicity, and subgroup, and notably, it remained relatively unchanged compared to the data from 2022. She also discussed the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) sharing data on the percentage of students tested and the distribution of students across various achievement levels.

Following that, David Sienko proceeded with the presentation, delivering an overview of ACCESS participation from 2022-2023. This included a discussion on demographic changes within the Multilingual Learners (MLL) population, along with a comprehensive comparison spanning five years. In general, ACCESS performance has shown minimal change over the past three years. Nevertheless, a promising development emerged between the academic years 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 which marked an increase in the percentage of students at the *Expanding and Bridging* levels.

Finally, key insights were provided. These encompassed a rise in participation across all state assessments, improvements in RICAS ELA and Math performance, steady NCSA Science performance across grades and positive trends in Rhode Island, as compared to neighboring states, including New Hampshire and Connecticut. Notably, Rhode Island narrowed performance gaps in Massachusetts by nearly 50%. Both suburban and urban districts demonstrated overall improvements, although substantial performance gaps persisted for students with chronic absenteeism.

b. FY 25 Budget

Chief Finance Officer, Mark Dunham initiated the budget presentation by offering an overview of the FY 2024 revised and the FY 2025 budget request. He highlighted that the revised FY 24 budget allocated \$1.7M for Davies Career & Tech to address unforeseen transportation costs and identified shortfalls in supply and salary budget lines. The proposed FY 25 budget request outlines a general revenue of \$151.9M, with the most substantial increase being \$102.9M in education aid.

Mr. Dunham presented data on the RIDE budget, categorizing funding sources and specifying all department-related funding streams. Additionally, he highlighted ongoing initiatives such as job fairs for school positions, support for the PREP RI site visits, incremental increases for adult basic

education, Enroll RI support, and professional development for MLL. In addition, he discussed new initiatives, including the Education Accountability Act, Pre-K expansion, Career & Technical Education expansion and support, assurance of support for school health efforts, and the implementation of strategies for Math and ELA improvement.

Furthermore, he supplied details on funding for Multilingual Learners and state aid. Additionally, he presented a summary of the COVID-19 relief funds and the allocation of education funds. Finally, he clarified that upon approval by the Council, the request would undergo review by the Office of Management and Budget. Subsequently, it would be incorporated into the Governor’s budget submission to the General Assembly in January. Budget hearings would take place in the Senate and House committees, leading to approval by the General Assembly in mid-June and ultimately, signed into law by the Governor

c. Pursuant to RIGL 16.7.1-5.1 for Review & Public Comment

Chief Strategy Officer Brian Darrow delivered a concise overview of the regulations, emphasizing their statewide applicability. He reiterated that public hearings would be conducted in each RI county. Following approval, the subsequent steps involve collaboration with the Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) and Secretary of State (SOS) to submit the required formal paperwork. He mentioned that there was not a formal presentation but instead an opportunity for additional comments or questions from Council members.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Approval of FY 25 Budget

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves and transmits the FY 2025 Budget request and the FY 24 revised Budget to the RI State Budget Office and further approve their transmission to the RI Board of Education for final approval

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,
 Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Approval of RIGL 16.7.1-5.1 for Review & Public Comment

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Proposed Regulations required pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5, for the purposes of public review and comment and scheduling of Public Hearings

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

c. Approval of the tentative agreement between RI Council 94, AFL-CIO, Local Union 1339, Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green and the Providence Public School District. The Council may seek to enter into Executive Session with respect to this matter pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(2)

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education enter into Executive session with respect to the matter pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(2)

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,
Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert
Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Michael Grey it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education seals the minutes
of Executive Session

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,
Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert
Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education goes back into
Regular Session

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan,
Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert
Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve of the tentative agreement between RI Council 94, AFL-CIO, Local Union 1339, Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green and the Providence Public School District.

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Mary Barden 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: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Patricia DiCenso, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.