



MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
February 27, 2023

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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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 5:32 p.m.

**Present:** Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, \*\*Michael Grey, \*Lisa Laeheeey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell, \*Christian Ramos

\*Ex-officio member

\*\* Chair Grey arrived at 6:00 p.m.

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Karen Davis, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary education accepts the agenda for the February 27,2024, meeting

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Karen Davis, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the January 30, 2024, meeting

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

### 3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kelvin Roldán delivered the report on the Commissioner's behalf. He began by thanking everyone for their support in all their efforts to ensure students are in class every day, ready to learn. He noted that since the launch of the Attendance Matters RI campaign, RIDE has seen a reduction of 256,000 fewer absences among students. He emphasized that earlier in the academic year, PPSD initiated an attendance heroes' campaign, offering families support. He noted that the district has appointed an attendance director, behavior interventionist, and additional support personnel to engage directly with families. He highlighted several schools excelling in the attendance campaign with specific examples. Dr. Roldán also discussed the launch of [www.attendancemattersRI.org](http://www.attendancemattersRI.org), which acts as a centralized hub for districts and community leaders to access resources, data dashboards, and advocate for the significance of consistent attendance. The website features videos contributed by a diverse group of Rhode Islanders and automated calls for LEAs from the Commissioner and Governor McKee, urging engagement with the Rhode Island Department of Education. (RIDE)

Following that, he addressed the 2024 SurveyWorks, a tool utilized by RIDE to gather feedback from stakeholders, calling out Leo Savoie Elementary School in Woonsocket for the level of engagement they've received. He pointed out that RIDE has abundant resources available on the website to assist schools and districts in effectively promoting SurveyWorks.

Next, he acknowledged that it was Black History Month, emphasizing it as an occasion to contemplate both the progress and the further steps required to ensure every child receives an inclusive, high-quality education.

He highlighted several community partners who have contributed outstanding resources for educators and individuals seeking to deepen their understanding. He expressed RIDE's pride in commemorating Black History Month and reiterated their commitment to fostering a more equitable education system, one that empowers young Black Rhode Islanders to leave their mark on history.

Continuing with the report, Dr. Roldán provided an update on CTE Month, as this month is dedicated to Career and Technical Education. He expressed gratitude to the exceptional educators who diligently guide students, providing them with comprehensive real-world experiences in the classroom, preparing them for their future college and career endeavors. He also mentioned that recently, RIDE had the honor of welcoming U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, to the Community College of Rhode Island. (CCRI) During his visit, they toured and engaged in discussions about the various career and technical education programs taking place across the state. He shared that at CCRI, high school students can gain hands-on experience and earn college credit in manufacturing trades through dual-enrollment classes. Numerous programs, students, and educators from across the state have been recognized for their innovative CTE initiatives and emphasized the significance of ensuring that students of color have equitable access to these opportunities, especially considering CCRI's designation as a Hispanic-serving institution.

He proceeded to discuss food pantries, highlighting that under the turnaround initiative, five new food pantries have opened in Providence schools, bringing the total to eight pantries in the district. A generous amount of \$50,000 from the Papiitto Opportunity Connection will fund these pantries. Their aim is to provide students and families with access to fresh and stable foods, along with backpacks and other essentials throughout the year. He expressed gratitude to the Papiitto Opportunity Connection, We Share Hope, Gil's Appliances, and all other partners involved for their contributions in making this initiative happen.

Finally, he provided an update on virtual learning plans. He mentioned that since the Council delegated authority to the Commissioner in July to approve virtual instructional day plans for use by LEAs in the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, a total of 36 LEAs have had their virtual plans approved. Additionally, he noted that the following seven LEAs have had their plans approved since the last council meeting. Segue Institute for Learning, North Smithfield, Highlander Charter, Glocester, Burrillville, Little Compton, and Coventry.

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

Seventeen individuals addressed the Council, and thirteen individuals submitted written comments.

**5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Chariho Regional School District’s Request for a Two-Day Emergency Reduction of the School Year pursuant to R.I. Gen Laws § 16-2-3**

Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella presented Chariho Regional School District’s request for a two-day extension, district-wide waiver of the 180-day school requirement due to weather events on December 18, 2023, and January 10, 2024. She explained that the Superintendent of Schools for the Chariho Regional School District wrote requesting a two-day waiver of the 180-school requirement for the entire district due to lack of power on December 18, 2023, and January 10, 2024. She added that RIDE informed the Superintendent that although the Regulations Governing the School Calendar and Length of the School Day (2018) gave the Commissioner authority to “shorten the school year for individual schools based on short-term emergency closures for a total of no more than five school days. 200-RICR-20-05-1.12, R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-3 provides that if an entire district was seeking such a waiver, approval of both the school committee and the Council was required. She further added that the Chariho Regional School Committee approved seeking the two-day waiver for the district and is now seeking approval from the Council. The Council posed questions which received appropriate responses. This item will be an action item on the next agenda.

**b. Annual Curriculum Adoption & Implementation Update**

Due to disruptive behavior from some attendees, Chair DiCenso requested a motion to temporarily go into recess.

On a motion duly made by Michael Grey and seconded by Mary Barden, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to take a recess.

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

On a motion duly made by Robert Mitchell and seconded by Michael Grey, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to go back into regular session.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, 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 moves to change the order of the agenda.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

**6. ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. Approval of Red-Lined Regulations pursuant to R.I. Gen Laws § 16-7.1-5.1**

On a motion duly made by Robert Mitchell and seconded by Michael Grey, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Regulations Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-7.1-5.1 as presented.

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative,

1 member voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: Mary Barden

ABSTAINS:

**b. Approval of Charter Renewals**

**Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy**

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew the charter of Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy for five years beginning with school year 2024-2025 and expiring at the end of school year 2028-2029.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

### **Hope Academy**

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew The charter of the Hope Academy for three years beginning with Year 2024-2025 and expiring at the end of school year 2026-2027, with conditions.

The Hope Academy holds the opportunity for a five-year renewal. Under an earned five-year renewal, charter terms automatically extend to a five-year term (school year 2024-25 to school year 2028-29) if the charter receives 3 stars or higher on RIDE's accountability system by the end of the school year 2025-26, a three-year renewal recommendation becomes final.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

### **Segue Institute for Learning**

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

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew The charter of the Segue Institute for Learning for five years beginning with school year 2024-25 and expiring at the end of school year 2028-29 with conditions.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

0 member voted in the negative and 0 members abstained, as follows:

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS:

ABSTAINS: 0

### **The Learning Community**

On a motion duly made by Michael Grey and seconded by Karen Davis, it was,

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew The charter of The Learning Community for three years beginning with school year 2024-25 and expiring at the end of school year 2026 – 27, with conditions. The Learning Community holds the opportunity for a five-year renewal.

Under this earned five-year renewal, charter terms extend to a five-year term (school year 2024-25 to school year 2028-29) if they meet two conditions – First, the charter must receive 3 stars or higher on RIDE’s accountability system by school year 2025-26. If the charter does not receive 3 stars or higher on RIDE’s accountability system by the end of the school year 2025-26, a three-year renewal recommendation becomes final.

Additionally, the charter must “Meet Expectations” on Financial Expectations on the School Year 2024-25 and 2025-26 Charter Performance Dashboards to extend the renewal to a five-year term (school year 2024-25 to school year 2028-29)

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

0 member voted in the negative and 0 members abstained, as follows:

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS:

ABSTAINS: 0



**DISCUSSION ITEM:****b. Annual Curriculum Adoption & Implementation Update**

Dr. Phyllis Lynch, Director of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum initiated the presentation by outlining its objectives for this evening. These encompass grasping both the teacher and student viewpoints regarding High-Quality Curriculum materials (HQCM), offering updates on the adoption and accessibility of such materials, including standards and curriculum frameworks, and emphasizing the significance of long-term implementation of high-quality curriculum materials. She offered a concise explanation of the rationale behind selecting high-quality curriculum and invited Aimée Couto, the State Teacher of the Year, to share her firsthand experiences with using high-quality curriculum. She also discussed the detailed implementation of HQCM and context of coherent instructional systems, aiming to provide the Council with a comprehensive understanding. Following that she offered an update on the academic standards endorsed by RIDE, and discussed the curriculum frameworks, which offer guidance on the implementation of HQCM. She also reviewed the count of elementary, middle, and high schools' instructional materials available for HQCM for Mathematics, ELA, and Science. During the presentation, the milestones of the 2019 legislation were highlighted. It was noted that RIDE and LEAs will persist in providing professional learning to support the implementation of HQCM, aiming to ensure that every student has access to grade-level materials and to maximize student outcomes. Subsequently, she addressed the role that everyone plays in implementation and explained why implementation is so important. She emphasized that RIDE provides support through professional learning opportunities to aid districts in their HQCM implementation, as well as how to utilize gathered data to construct implementation plans. Additionally, she outlined components of a professional learning cycle to support the cycle of continuous improvement. She conveyed that all teachers will be equipped with the necessary resources and support to effectively deliver HQCM with integrity. Lastly, she outlined the next steps in the process.

**7. ADJOURNMENT:**

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

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

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Karen Davis, Patricia DiCenso, Michael  
Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.