



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
May 28, 2024

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair Grey 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: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell, *Lisa Leaheey

*Ex-officio member

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary education accepts the agenda for the April 30, 2024, meeting

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, 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 Karen Davis, it was,

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

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

RECUSAL: Jo Eva Gaines

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante-Green began by expressing gratitude for all the support for the #AttendanceMattersRI campaign. She reminded everyone that data showed that there is a more than 20 percentage point achievement gap between students who are in school regularly and those who are chronically absent. She mentioned that she was recently invited to the White House by Secretary Cardona to discuss Rhode Island's attendance initiatives. Rhode Island was acknowledged for its statewide campaign and for having the only real-time attendance dashboard in the country. Additionally, Education Week highlighted Rhode Island for its various education tools. She also took a moment to thank everyone who joined RIDE for the AP Day Celebration at the State House. RIDE was joined by Governor Dan McKee, Secretary of State Greg Amore, Senate Education Chair Sandra Cano, and House Education Chair Joe McNamara, to announce the strides Rhode Island has made with AP participation and achievement. She added that according to the College Board, Rhode Island leads the nation in the largest 10-year growth of students scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam, increasing from 14.2% in the class of 2013 to 21.6% in the class of 2023.

Moving on, she discussed the 21st Century Community Learning grants. To align with the LEAP Task Force report and recommendations, RIDE recently announced an award of \$3.3 Million annually in five-year grants to 12 community-based organizations and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). They will provide high-quality after-school and summer learning programs for students. She added that the award program is federally funded through the Nita N. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, which RIDE first administered in 2003. These funds will help provide academic support, enrichment, and family engagement services in targeted schools.

Next, she spoke about Summer Readiness Camps, mentioning that RIDE is gearing up to ensure students continue to learn and grow during the break. RIDE has allocated \$700,000 towards specialized summer readiness camps aimed at bolstering Algebra 1 proficiency for rising 9th graders. She noted that the summer readiness camps will provide students from 14 local LEAs with a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. Additionally, this initiative underscores the state's commitment to ensuring students have the math knowledge, skills, and mindsets they will need to be successful in high school.

Lastly, Commissioner Infante-Green mentioned that, in accordance with statewide regulations approved by this Council, RIDE is preparing to initiate an independent mid-term review of the turnaround efforts. She stated that in the upcoming weeks, SchoolWorks, a long-established partner in evaluating LEAs and charter schools in Rhode Island, will assess the progress made so far and evaluate the readiness of local authorities for the return. These statewide regulations were developed with the assistance of education experts and were subjected to months of public comment. They apply to all districts undergoing intervention. She noted that more information about the review process can be found on the RIDE website. She also reminded them that, as RIDE has done in the past they will share the findings and provide further updates on the work.

4. OPEN FORUM

Five individuals addressed the Council, and 26 written statements were submitted.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Award Recognition

Chair Grey called up the awardee, Stacy Gale. Nicole Lyons, Associate Director, recognized a Rhode Island educator as the state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). She highlighted that this awardee exemplifies the expertise and dedication of the nation's teaching force, showcasing the positive impact excellent teachers have on student achievement in STEM. It was noted that she is now eligible to receive a National PAEMST award, the nation's highest honor for U.S. K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers. The awards program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. She added that each year, a national committee of prominent mathematicians, scientists, mathematics/science education researchers, district level personnel, and classroom teachers recommends up to 108 teachers to receive PAEMST awards. Up to two teachers, mathematics or science, from each state receive the award. Teachers who are selected as National PAEMST awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. Awardees also receive a \$10,000 award from NSF, a Presidential certificate, and join an elite cohort of award-winning teachers who can influence State and National STEM teaching.

Commissioner Infante-Green also shared her appreciation to Stacy Gale, sharing that she goes above and beyond in her classroom responsibilities in her role as a GEMS-Net Teacher Leader where she builds teacher capacity for improving Science and STEM teaching. Additionally, her partnerships with various environmental organizations truly highlight her commitment to integrating classroom learning with the community her students are apart of. Commissioner Infante-Green expressed her gratitude for her leadership and positive impact on the advancement of science education at Paul Cuffee and for Our Kids in Rhode Island.

b. iSTEM Endorsement

Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella began by setting the stage for the discussion and then introduced Gina Masiello, the Director of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, along with Carolyn Higgins, STEM Specialist in the office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, to deliver the presentation.

Director Masiello started by reminding the Council of what an endorsement entails. She explained that an endorsement is designed to expand or deepen content knowledge or specialty area expertise. She added that it can be added to a current, existing, and valid RI Educator Certificate, and clarified that it is not required by RIDE for school assignments. She elaborated on RIDE's role in developing endorsements, stating that they identify endorsement areas, formulate competencies and seek Council approval.

Ms. Higgins proceeded with the presentation, introducing the concept of STEM education in elementary grades. She provided a detailed explanation of integrated STEM, also referred to as transdisciplinary or convergence education. She articulated the justification for including this endorsement area, outlining that iSTEM endorsement necessitates students applying core subject knowledge to address real-world challenges, thereby enhancing the relevance of learning. She added that moreover, it allows educators to showcase proficiency in essential competencies, while also identifying those capable of advancing effective iSTEM education initiatives. She mentioned that it also aligned with RIDE's strategic plan goal of providing experiential learning opportunities to support 21st-century education. She also provided a comprehensive explanation of the competencies outlined in the proposed endorsement. Ms. Higgins added that plans for integrated STEM and STEAM are in place and include a RI STEM Education Advisory Group, formulating a STEM strategic plan, conducting STEM program visits, and developing a PK-5 integrated STEM endorsement. Additionally, annual events take place related to STEAM. She addressed initiatives that integrate STEM and STEAM within schools, highlighting current programs and pilot initiatives in progress.

Finally, Director Masiello detailed the post-approval procedures for the iSTEM endorsement. Providers seeking to offer professional learning aligned with iSTEM competencies must apply to become RIDE-approved iSTEM endorsement providers. RIDE will rigorously review these applications to ensure that programs enable educators to demonstrate proficiency in the competencies. Additionally, approved providers will subsequently be listed on the official RIDE certification webpage.

c. MLL Strategy Updates: Categorical Funding & Exit Criteria

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kelvin Roldán commenced by providing an overview of the presentation. Commissioner Infante-Green then offered additional context and introduced the team that would deliver the presentation, comprising Brian Darrow, Chief Strategy Officer, David Sienko, Director of the Office of Student Community and Academic Supports, and Flavia Molea-Baker, Coordinator of English Language Learner Education Programs.

Chief Darrow began by providing a recap by providing a recap of RIDE's strategy to enhance outcomes for MLLs, inspired by RIDE's blueprint for MLL success. This strategy incorporates a comprehensive and holistic approach, engaging students, families, school systems, and educators. He stated that RIDE intends to utilize all available policy tools to execute a comprehensive strategy for enhancing outcomes for MLL students. This strategy is grounded in the core values of quality, flexibility, and support, particularly within the frameworks of categorical funding, regulations, exit criteria, and direct support.

Director Sienko proceeded with an overview of the funding. He highlighted that RIDE's advocacy has resulted in a significant increase in MLL categorical funding, which is crucial for LEAs to meet the substantially higher costs of serving MLL students. He added that since 2019, MLL categorical funds have been focused on expanding bilingual programs, certifications, educators and administrators' endorsement and training as allowable expenditures. He added that driven by feedback from school system and MLL leaders, RIDE is making key strategic updates to enable LEAs to better strategically invest in MLL student success. These updates include expanding expenditure flexibility, aligned improvement and engagement efforts and enhancing fiscal efficiency. He delivered a detailed and comprehensive analysis of each update.

Ms. Molea-Baker proceeded with an update on MLL student exit criteria, outlining how the revised criteria will provide students with multiple pathways to demonstrate English language proficiency. She noted that RI has nearly closed the performance gap between recently exited MLL students and those who were never identified as MLLs. She provided information based on the 2023 ACCESS results, presenting graphs that detail the distribution of multilingual learners who did not meet the ACCESS exit criteria, segmented by the number of years they have been designated as multilingual learners. Additionally, based on researching national best practices and internal data modeling, RIDE enhancing the MLL student exit criteria to provide students multiple pathways to demonstrate English language proficiency.

Lastly, Chief Darrow presented a high-level roadmap outlining the steps from the launch of the MLL strategy in March 2024, which began with introductory conversations at the K-12 Council meeting. The roadmap extends through 2025 and beyond during which RIDE will continue supporting LEAs and educators with implementation, engaging and leveraging key partners for a coherent and cohesive statewide execution, and eventually releasing the formal "action plan."

d. Secondary Regulations Update

Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella began by setting the context and introducing State Strategy and Opportunities Officer Stephen Osborn and Executive Associate Olivia Smith, along with school and district partners. The team would be presenting an update on Rhode Island's transition to readiness-based graduation requirements.

Mr. Osborn started off by outlining the presentation objectives, which would include detailing RIDE's initiatives to support secondary schools in implementing Readiness-Based graduation requirements. Furthermore, it will include an update on RIDE's "Let's Get Ready" community of practice and hearing from school and district leaders about the support that has been provided thus far. Mr. Osborn informed the Council that his team has been very busy since the last update in October and that they are making significant progress on the 5-year "Let's Get Ready" implementation action plan. He outlined the six goals included in the action plan, initially highlighting goals 4, 5, and 6: Rhode Island will prepare our graduates to create their own futures, increase engagement through real-world relevant learning experiences, and changing how we support our children and families. He noted that RIDE has published more than 100 pages of guidance on RIDE's Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements, adding that ten guidance documents have been published on various aspects of Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements.

He then addressed Goal 1: Partnerships and Collaboration. He reported that the team had organized four virtual, theme-based sessions available to all Rhode Island middle and high school teams and continues to offer direct coaching support to schools upon request. He reported that over 270 unique participants joined the community of practice virtual sessions, representing more than 42 LEAs from across the state. Additionally, he noted that the team has provided support to 22 high schools through coaching calls as well.

Ms. Smith continued by discussing Goal 2: Reimagine Learning. She highlighted that RIDE had received feedback indicating that school schedules could impede the implementation of Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements. In response, RIDE provided statewide scheduling support to all high schools starting in November 2023. She introduced the ABL high school scheduling process, designed to offer the necessary support. Ms. Smith also noted that nine high schools are presently working with ABL to redesign their schedules. Ms. Smith introduced Molly Silvia, Assistant Principal at East Greenwich High School; Angelo Garcia, Founder and Executive Director of Segue Legacy High School; and Melissa Lorencio, Co-Founder and District Administrator of Segue Legacy High School. They were invited to provide insights into their experiences with the ABL process and the support they have received from the RIDE team.

Mr. Osborn continued and discussed Goal 3: Develop a Statewide Approach to Comprehensive School Counseling. He reported that RIDE has initiated the process of updating the statewide school counseling framework, which includes conducting listening tours at various elementary, middle, and high schools. Lastly, he mentioned that RIDE continues to engage with school teams for ongoing support and extended an invitation to the "Let's Get Ready" June exhibition,

scheduled for June 25 at the Waterfire Arts Center for a celebration of our high schools, continued statewide implantation collaboration and lunch. He concluded by expressing gratitude for everyone’s time, insights, and commitment to reimaging high school education.

e. Get the Foam Out Awards

Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella set the stage for the discussion and introduced Chief Equity Officer, Mario Carreño to deliver the presentation. Chief Carreño began by announcing that Rhode Island faces a Styrofoam problem, with 11.5 million single-use trays being utilized annually in our schools. Additionally, he pointed out that we also face a significant food waste issue, with 6.5 million pounds being generated annually. He shared that the “Get the Foam Out” initiative will assist schools in complying with the newly enacted Styrofoam ban pursuant to RIGL § 21-27.3-2, which will take effect on January 1, 2025. Chief Carreño provided examples of eligible projects, discussed their prioritization and sustainability, and identified the LEAs that submitted applications. Additionally, he announced that this initiative will eliminate 5 million Styrofoam trays and recover 1.8 million pounds of food.

f. Necessity of School Construction

Deputy Commissioner Lisa Odom-Villella framed the discussion and turned the meeting over to Chief Carreño. He began the presentation on the necessity of school construction approvals by sharing the General Assembly incentives and policy changes that have worked. He shared that between 2018 and 2024, \$5.2 billion in school construction has been approved, supporting hundreds of projects statewide. Of this amount, \$2 billion is allocated to four high-need communities. He also highlighted the opening of 50 new schools and the creation of 28,000 jobs. Furthermore, \$600 million in guaranteed opportunities for local women and minority owned businesses has been established. Lastly, Chief Carreño identified the LEAs under consideration for approval and provided detailed descriptions of the renovation projects they had submitted.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

a. iSTEM Endorsement Approval

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves a new endorsement area in PK-5 Integrated STEM.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,

0 member voted in the negative

YEAS: Amy Beretta Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Get the Foam Out Grant Awards Approval

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the allocation of \$2,661,793 of the Fiscal Year 2024 SBA Capital Fund as follows:

Beacon Charter	\$23,198
Blackstone Academy	\$38,300
Bristol-Warren	\$88,037
Burrillville	\$72,195
Central Falls	\$381,500
Charette Charter	\$15,550
Chariho	\$68,684
Compass School	\$22,398
Cumberland	\$23,015
East Greenwich	\$145,000
Johnston	\$57,327
Lincoln	\$446,216
Little Compton	\$75,950
Middletown	\$100,380
Narragansett	\$13,536
Newport	\$9,040
North Kingstown	\$165,662
North Providence	\$74,000
Nuestro Mundo	\$44,225
Providence	\$348,996
RI School for the Deaf	\$163,001
Scituate	\$15,996
Smithfield	\$167,040
South Kingstown	\$7,654
Tiverton	\$85,230
Westerly	\$9,663

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

c. Necessity of School Construction Approvals

Barrington

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$250,000,000 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$87,500,000 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Chariho

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karen Davis, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$7,592,515 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$4,631,434 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Cranston

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 the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$48,303,002 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$26,017,591 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

East Greenwich

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karen Davis, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$172,092,790 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$60,232,477 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Foster

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$2,298,089 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$804,330 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Foster-Glocester

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karen Davis, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$7,776,295 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$4,070,766 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Johnston

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 the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$115,092,608 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$47,771,489 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Middletown

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Robert Mitchell, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$207,141,672 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$72,499,585 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Providence

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$466,396,998 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$374,060,187 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Scituate

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

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$6,056,924 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$2,119,923 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

Segue

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Robert Mitchell, it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve the necessity of school construction projects totaling \$25,000,000 pursuant to 16-7-41.1 as follows (please note that when applicable reimbursement share ratios are applied to the estimated total project costs noted below, the state share is expected to be \$7,500,000 excluding interest and potential bonuses)

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

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis,
Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

7. **ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Karen Davis 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: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.