



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
November 18, 2025**

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair Mike Grey welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Present: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, *Alexandra Ford, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell,*Milissa O'Neil

*Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Mary Barden, it was,

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda.

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

RECUSAL: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion duly made by Mary Barden and seconded by Marta Martinez, it was,

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the October 28, 2025, meeting

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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Robert Mitchell

RECUSAL: 0

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Infante- Green began by noting that she would be sharing important updates that reflect the progress and innovation happening across Rhode Island schools—highlights that underscore RIDE's commitment to academic excellence, civic engagement, student success, and preparing all learners for the future.

She opened by announcing that Kyle Spaltholz, a counselor at Portsmouth Middle School, has been honored with the Milken Educator Award, a national recognition that includes a \$25,000 prize. This achievement not only celebrates his individual excellence but also reflects the strength of Rhode Island's educational and support systems.

She then highlighted a collaborative initiative centered on democracy and civic responsibility. RIDE has partnered with Secretary of State Gregg Amore and the Rhode Island Bar Association to elevate civics and public service programs in Rhode Island schools. These programs, supported by the Bar Association, aim to deepen students' understanding of government, law, and civic engagement. She expressed her appreciation that Justice Melissa Long participated in an event at the State House encouraging schools to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Turning to attendance, she emphasized that regular attendance is essential to student achievement and noted RIDE's continued efforts to address chronic absenteeism. She shared that, alongside Governor McKee, RIDE announced the launch of the Statewide Attendance Leaderboard and the new Calendar Heat Map for the 2025–26 school year. These innovative dashboards, which have earned national and international recognition, provided real-time attendance data and offer transparent, actionable insights for schools, families, and communities.

She also recognized November as STEAM Month in Rhode Island. Throughout the month, RIDE has organized school visits, community events, and released a statewide calendar of activities focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. She noted that STEAM Month is an opportunity to highlight the creativity and curiosity thriving in classrooms, reinforcing that education is the foundation of progress.

Lastly, she provided an update on virtual instructional day plans for use by LEAs during inclement weather or emergencies, noting that 16 LEAs have submitted plans for the 2025–2026 academic year.

4. OPEN FORUM

Fifty-four individuals addressed the council, and forty-six written statements were submitted.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5a. Accountability Results

Deputy Commissioner Drew Echelson opened the presentation with an overview, explaining that he would cover a recap of Rhode Island’s accountability system, a review of the 2025 overall results and key trends, and the next steps for how RIDE, LEAs, and schools will use the results. He began by outlining RIDE’s Accountability System, noting that it is required under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, informed by a Committee of Practitioners, including multiple performance measures, and is designed as a holistic system to highlight student performance and guide improvement efforts.

He then reviewed the school star rating system and clarified what each rating represents. He explained that RIDE identifies and exits low-performing schools in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) every two years, and he described the conditions that can lead a school to be designated as CSI.

Next, he presented the key takeaways for 2025, noting an overall net-positive increase in school star ratings from 2024 to 2025. He emphasized that secondary schools continue to lag elementary schools in percentage earning three stars or higher. Achievement remains the biggest area of focus statewide, with differently abled students identified as the subgroup most in need of support. He highlighted that accountability data is now more actionable and accessible through an enhanced report card and new data tools, and he urged schools to analyze their results immediately to inform improvements for the remainder of this year and next year, aligned to RIDE’s high-impact priority areas.

He spotlighted both student and teacher chronic absenteeism, noting that RIDE tracks each because reducing absenteeism is essential for maximizing instructional time. He also shared that Rhode Island continues to see growth in the percentage of students earning a Postsecondary Success (PSS) credential and that, for the first time, more than 50% of graduating students will earn one.

He concluded with a call to action, emphasizing that schools should promptly review their accountability results to identify both immediate and long-term adjustments to improve student outcomes. High-leverage efforts aligned to RIDE priorities include attendance, high-quality teaching and learning, post-secondary success, and closing opportunity gaps. He added that next steps include LEAs and schools thoroughly reviewing their accountability results to determine areas for short- and long-term improvement.

5b. Charter School Updates

Student Opportunity Officer Steve Osborn began by providing an overview of charter schools, including the definition, the structure of charter school funding and facilities, and the admissions process. He then presented data demonstrating that parent demand for charter schools continues to grow, increasing from 12,005 applications in 2014–2015 to 30,202 applications in 2025–2026. He noted that 78% of charter school applicants reside in Rhode Island’s urban core.

He highlighted that in urban core districts, 55% of open-enrollment middle school seats and 88% of open-enrollment high school seats are in one-star schools. By contrast, 48% of Rhode Island’s charter school seats are in schools rated three stars or higher, while only 5.7% of charter school seats are in one-star schools.

He also shared findings from a 2023 national charter school study conducted by CREDO at Stanford University, which reported that Rhode Island charter school students outperformed their peers in traditional public schools, achieving the equivalent of an additional half-year of learning annually in both reading and mathematics.

He concluded by underscoring that RIDE’s approach to charter school authorization is producing strong results.

5c. Charter School Renewals

Steve Osborn began by providing an overview of the charter school renewal process, including the accountability framework and renewal timeline. He then detailed RIDE’s renewal recommendations, noting that each school under review is considered for one of three renewal terms: five years, three years, or one year. He further explained that RIDE may impose conditions when a charter school demonstrates a specific area of need. These conditions are time-bound and require regular monitoring to ensure that the school is making sufficient progress toward meeting RIDE’s expectations.

He also outlined a new renewal condition proposed this year: a full resubmission of the charter. This requirement applies to four schools, including those originally approved prior to the Council’s 2016 revision of the new-seats process and that have faced challenges in meeting academic expectations. He noted that if a school fails to submit a resubmission that meets RIDE’s standards, the charter revocation process will begin in Fall 2026.

He concluded by reviewing the renewal recommendations for this cycle. Beacon Charter School is recommended for a five-year renewal for the high school and a three-year renewal with conditions for the middle school. Nuestro Mundo Charter School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, PVD Prep, and Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts are recommended for three-year renewals, with Highlander Charter School also receiving a three-year renewal with conditions. The Charette Charter School and Village Green Virtual Charter School are recommended for one-year renewals with conditions.

5d. Charter School New Seats and Expansions

Steve Osborn began by outlining the primary factors guiding the current set of recommendations, which include the application materials, the local impact analysis, and the public comment hearings. These elements collectively inform the Commissioner's recommendation, which is followed by Council deliberation and a vote for preliminary approval. He emphasized that RIDE gives priority to new-seat proposals that expand access to high-quality educational opportunities for students in communities with CSI schools, as well as for educationally disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged, differently abled, and multilingual learners.

He also noted that Rhode Island General Law establishes a cap of 35 charter schools statewide, with at least half of those seats reserved for charter applications specifically designed to improve educational opportunities for at-risk students. To date, RIDE has authorized 24 charters. If the Council advances the current new-seat recommendations, the state will remain ten charters below the statutory cap.

He then provided an overview of the considerations before the K-12 Council and proceeded to review the proposed expansions and new-school applications. He first addressed PVD Prep's request to expand by adding 168 students in grades 5–8 within its Providence catchment area and noted that the school withdrew its new-seats application on November 5, 2025.

He next reviewed The Greene School's expansion proposal, which seeks to add 168 students in grades 6–8 to its existing grades 9–12 model. The Greene School operates with a statewide catchment area.

He then presented the proposal from De La Comunidad Bilingual School, which is seeking preliminary approval to open a K–12 program with a catchment area that includes Cranston, Pawtucket, and Providence. The school proposes to begin operations in the 2027–2028 academic year, opening with grades K–12 and adding additional grades thereafter.

He also discussed MedPrep Academy's new-school application to serve 468 students in grades K–12 with a catchment area that includes Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence. He noted that MedPrep withdrew its application on October 6, 2025.

He concluded with the proposal from New England Tech Academy, which is seeking preliminary approval to establish a grade 9–12 program with a statewide catchment area, anticipating that approximately 75 percent of enrolled students would come from Providence and Pawtucket. The school proposes to open in the 2026–2027 academic year with grade 9 and expand by one grade level each subsequent year.

5e. Facilitated IEP Annual Report

Chief of Teaching and Learning Lisa Foehr began the presentation by providing an overview of the Facilitated IEP/504 (FIEP) service, noting that it was introduced to the General Assembly in April 2023 as a proactive initiative to enhance meaningful parent engagement throughout the IEP process. In May 2023, the Governor and General Assembly allocated funding to establish the program, and by March 2024, the service became operational and available to families and schools across the state.

She described the process, emphasizing that a neutral facilitator ensures all voices are heard. The service is accessible at all stages of the IEP/504 process, is voluntary and free for families and districts, and maintains a student-centered approach in every decision. She highlighted the benefits demonstrated of the FIEP service and noted a growing demand for its utilization.

She also presented data on facilitation requests, including the demographics of participating in students, grade levels, and district-level participation. Finally, she shared insights from stakeholders in the field and outlined the next steps, which include strengthening partnerships with families and districts to ensure all Rhode Island students are supported, expanding awareness across districts, redesigning the Rhode Island IEP system, and training local facilitators to build long-term capacity.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion duly made by Marta Martinez and seconded by Mary Barden it was,

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

Discussion and possible action with respect to the proposed final Tentative Agreement between the Central Falls Board of Trustees and the Central Falls Teachers' Union.

Discussion and possible action with respect to pending litigation in Angelica Infante-Green, in her capacity as Chief Executive Officer, and On behalf of, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education v, RIDE Professional Employees' Union, Local 2012, AFT, R.I., Superior Court Case No. PM-2025-02739, which concerns an appeal from an arbitration decision.

Roll Call was taken by Christine Kechejian

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,
0 members voted in the negative

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Following Discussion

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Mary Barden it was,

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approve to go back into Open Session.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative,
0 members voted in the negative

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair Grey noted for the record that a vote was not taken with respect to the matters discussed in Executive Session.

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Mary Barden and seconded by Amy Beretta 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

YEAS: Mary Barden, Amy Beretta, Karen Davis, Michael Grey, Marta Martinez, Robert Mitchell

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.