

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

MEETING MINUTES

Date: _February 23, 2010__

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelly Deming

Call to Order

a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:09 p.m. at the Dept of Administration, Conference Room B

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

New Members: A. Donnelly Roche, Harvey Corson, Iraida Williams, Jodi Merryman, Marie Lynch,

In Attendance: Mary Wambach, Travis Zellner, A. Donnelly Roche, Iraida Williams, Jodi Merryman, Marie Lynch

b. Excused: Dr. Harvey Corson

Chairman, Travis Zellner, asked for a modification of the scheduled agenda – because one of the trustees would have to leave at 7:00

p.m. – would go to

New Business: Layoff/Program Redesign:

Lori Dunsmore: Refers to letter from Commissioner Gist re: qualification review and identified school-wide discrepancies; by June 1st must have a revised staffing plan placement for highly qualified and fully certified teachers. Dunsmore asked PaulaJo Gaines, Director of Teacher Quality & Certification, to speak about qualification and how it related to our school. PaulaJo commented on highly qualified, No Child Left Behind, Teachers of Deaf certification and teaching core content. The Director noted that the administration would have to reconfigure teacher assignments because RIDE found many instances where personnel records were lacking necessary evidence of certification or qualification; generate assignments, reposition ourselves with revised staffing plan – most of faculty has to have notice of lay-off prior to March 1st. The Director recommends that the entire faculty be placed on lay-off status. She noted that with the transition to the new building, there will be enrollment changes; can't guarantee staff reductions; conclusion of current school year, they will be laid off. Lori will provide revised staffing plan for highly qualified and certified teachers with approval from RIDE; must work within financial parameters; committed to calling back every staff member within those parameters – the lay off is necessary to review program needs, enrollment, qualifications, etc.

Questions from trustees: The school is involved in intervention plan; will this reorganization plan satisfy the commissioner? Did any or how many staff meet qualifications?

PaulaJo: Final report not compiled, Lori does not have that information.

Travis: Understood lay off is school-wide and based on school-wide discrepancies per RIDE's letter; when your analysis took place of who's qualified or not; was consideration of communication and signing considered, as well as Deaf education experiences?

PaulaJo: what ESEA, law requires and federal regulations; need further review; all other evidence can be brought in.

Travis asked if the lay off was school wide, including Board of Regent employees? Dunsmore replied – yes some BOR and 2012 member are impacted; also concerned about the time that will be given to staff to provide documentation to get qualification status resolved; if found specific areas of concern, encourage those people to comply.

PaulaJo: We will look at where people are and the evidence; will take each person individually and encourage them to become highly qualified; we will work w/them.

Lori: Administration team will keep communication lines open – to offer some support or resources.....

Discussion followed as to the possibility of finding qualified teachers; morale and anxiety; parents informed that teaching supports will be provided; staff continuing to cooperate; was noted also that hard of hearing people miss a lot – need additional resources; fiscal restraints; drop in enrollment; require all staff lay off.

Ken Swanson (RIDE Office of Diverse Learners): noted that the discrepancies are to such a degree that every one is questionable; we would recommend immediate termination; we are trying to buy some

time to protect staff.

Travis noted that this is a unique situation; school-wide does not sit well; why not entire school – more discussion about how RIDE will work with the school and the board to help the teachers; discrepancy report will be done in two weeks; don't have a lot of time. –

Board of Trustees in Consensus – all in agreement to accept the Director's recommendation for teacher/staff lay offs.

Legal Representation:

Wayne Hannon, Asst. Director, explained the process by which new law firm was chosen – Request for Qualifications, reviewed by Chairman of Board, Director and legal counsel from DOA, as well as himself. As a result of the review and the withdrawal of one firm, Little Medeiros Kinder Bulman & Whitney PC were chosen as legal counsel to RISD and the Board of Trustees. Wayne noted that they looked at background and litigation experience, as well as cost; Robinson law firm was chosen by review panel, but consequently withdrew their bid, therefore, they chose the Little Medeiros firm.

This commitment will be until the end of the current fiscal year, then, a determination will be made by the Board and Administration to either to continue services of LMKBW or go out for bid again for FY11.

The Board of Trustees, while disappointed of Robinson's withdrawal, in consensus, recommended to accept Little Medeiros Kinder Bulman & Whitney PC, as legal counsel for the balance of FY10.

Travis noted that a process needs to be set up on how the attorneys

will work with the Board and the Director. Nancy will email Request For Qualifications to all board members.

Public Comment: Travis Zellner noted comments limited to two minutes each.

Dinaz Adenwalla, President of Teacher's Union: wanted to note that we have a dedicated faculty and staff; want to have work reflect our interest; will work with administration.

John Leideker, NEARI attorney: represents the teachers, noted that he was glad the Highly Qualified report would be done in two weeks; concerned about the anxiety this situation is causing teachers and staff; noted also that negotiations are going well, but concerned that Dan Kinder, who also represents East Providence, is involved – noted that E.P. has already spent \$1M.

Break – 5 minutes.....

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

- February 26, 2009 – approved as amended**
- November 17, 009 – approved as amended**
- December 1, 2009 - approved**

Reports:

Chairperson – Travis: happy working with new board members; RIDE is very supportive; new Board will establish direction for RISD;

change date of BOT meetings this year so that new people are able to attend; would like to formalize and identify a vice-chair and secretary; understand what are the roles and responsibilities of trustees.

Director: Lori Dunsmore – refers to her report she has handed to everyone in a folder; briefly went over some of the points; noted that administrative staff have weekly meetings; discussing new building and the 2010-2011 school year; our goal is to open on time – would like to have opening ceremony first week in August.

Introduced administrative staff to the new board members.

Assistant Director(s): Mary Smith, Asst. Director of Academics – noted that they have Professional Development on Wednesday early-release days. Joe Fischgrund is involved with language planning; compliance with special ed; the teacher evaluation tool was well received; working on PBGR requirements; Read Across America on March 2; Comm Gist will come in to read; the calendar is being worked on; will present to the board; placement of staff on hold till more info available.

Wayne Hannon (for Corsino Delgado), Asst. Director of Operations & Finance: reported that some staff had taken a tour of the new school; construction on time; hoping to have graduation ceremony there – will not happen; we are targeted to move the administration offices in July; summer school will remain at Rhodes; there will be a dramatic change in technology at the new school; remodeling the auditorium

and gym – budget allowed some changes. He answered Travis’s question regarding the rent paid to Warwick for the Rhodes School...money comes from capital budget – will not be transferred to our budget.

Sub-Committees:

- **Policy Committee – Mary Wambach, Chair – student handbook will become item on agenda to move forward.**

New member Amy Roche – referred to NEASK report – inclusion of enrollment information, re staff and assignments – primary disabilities – without violating confidentiality; would like to know a little bit more about the children and staffing requirements.

- **Building Committee – already reported on by Wayne Hannon**

- **Personnel Committee – no Chair – no report**

- **Budget and Finance Committee – Wayne Hannon noted that the state has issues state-wide; working on final numbers 2010/2011; we are on target.**

Fee for Service – structure within school for services that are non-core; should be seeing 900,000 in revenue from districts; no longer in general revenue budget; some districts are not paying; legislation pending to take money out of state aid if districts do not pay; RIDE is aware of the hole in budget. Wayne will provide the legislative bill number to the board. RISD will reevaluate every year and will provide a comparison to districts as to what it would cost for

districts to provide those services; bottom line is – Core services stay with us – non-Core services provided by Districts – will meet with districts to reinforce that.

Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(2) and (9)

c. MOVED (Iraida Williams) AND SECONDED (Mary Wambach): That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 8:11 p.m. Approved unanimously.

d. MOVED (Mary Wambach) AND SECONDED (Amy Roche): That the Board would return to Open Session at 8:17 p.m. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session: No motions or consensus during Executive session.

Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date:

II. Adjournment

a. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.