



## **WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**Date:** July 20, 2010

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Minutes recorded by:** Nancy Sousa

**Minutes approved on:**

**Interpreters:** Christine West, Maureen McEntee

Cart: Jen Milette

### **Call to Order**

- a. Vice-Chairperson Mary Wambach called the work session of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:10 p.m. at One Capitol Hill, Conference Room B, Providence, RI 02908

### **Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

- b. **In Attendance:**, Marie Lynch, Jodi Merryman, Amy Donnelly Roche, Mary Wambach, Iraida Williams.
- c. **Excused:** Travis Zellner, Chairman, Harvey Corson, Two Vacant

Vice Chair, Mary Wambach noted that no votes will be taken at this work session. Scott Mueller noted that he was no longer under contract, but that he offered to come to this work session to see if he could be helpful – his presence is “unofficial”. He was invited to join the board at the table.

## **AGENDA**

Discussion Items:

### 1. Board of Trustees Logistics:

- a. Alignment of BOT Matrix/Calendar/Integrated Plan

Discussion: Director noted that she had revised the schedule; the matrix is a reference, not in stone; all received a copy of the revised schedule. Scott Mueller noted that this is a routine calendar of work, included in each month’s agenda;

good tool to use to anticipate what issues will be discussed; significant issues may be added.

- b. Strategic Plan: Board Work Plan – included in other discussions.

## 2. Director Evaluation Tool:

- a. Evaluation of the Director Instrument

Mary Wambach asked about the timeline of the Director's evaluation; clarification of annual issues – the Director noted that her goals would be discussed in closed session.

Scott Mueller noted that the ~~B~~board approved the calendar and the instrument – ~~the Board~~ still has ~~ve~~ to ~~look at~~ determine what data it will look at and how it will be ~~collected~~ ~~collected~~. He suggested that the board ask the Director and her staff to design a survey with 360° feedback – to collect information from many sources. ~~The~~ ~~decisions~~ (on what data to be collected) need to be made by February; the Board will hear Director's report in ~~January~~ December and respond to questions about it by January. ~~;~~ ~~The~~ evaluation instrument is aligned with RIDE's educational leadership standards; once goals are finalized, add elements of evaluation process. He noted that the agreed-on goals become data elements that becomes part of evaluation; ~~the Board should take another look at~~ review the strategic plan, the feedback from RIDE, the Work Plan from Regents ~~and~~ ~~–~~ set goals ~~with for~~ the Director; ~~build~~ All four documents (provide the basis for the matrix) make sure you are on course for the year. All of this work takes time, but the matrix should be reviewed for thoroughness. ~~a single strategic plan one year from now; give yourself time; review matrix for thoroughness; adjust and approve as you go.~~

- c. Data Collection – Scott Mueller noted that the timing of decisions on data collection follows goal package from Director; RISD is unique in that it reaches out all over the state; e.g. In August, work out goals with ~~D~~irector and have a good idea in September; director can make recommendations of where to get data; work comes to the board for action.

Marie Lynch noted that the data needs to be aligned with what the goals are, and wondered if ~~–~~ ~~is~~ ~~there~~ was a general list of data that school boards use. ?

Scott Mueller answered that there are standard places to look at job performance-some provide measurable data, e.g. budget management, union relationships, sick leave days, grievances (although this is not advised) – ~~all are~~can be a measure of how happy people are; says something about the culture of the organization. NECAP scores – well-respected; look at more than one thing to assess student assessment (AYP), e.g. student portfolio. Provide feedback to Director.

Director Dunsmore noted that RI School for the Deaf~~the deaf school~~ is different, but that she wanted to show that we have had growth; will show and make it clear to the Commissioner too.

Mary Wambach noted that in the past there were serious problems with the culture of the school; the strategic plan was interrupted by RIDE's intervention; the first year evaluation should be very narrow because of what happened in the last 18 months.

Scott Mueller added that the opportunity to narrow focus will come by how you negotiate and prioritize goals; the Board needs to be cautious; don't setup for failure...the complexity of evaluation process is worked by standards – the Board can add, but (once decided) you can't subtract; pay attention to scope; the Board has the power to decide what's really important and what's not; ~~you and have the ability to~~ shape meaning of the data that comes in. It is advisable to seek ~~s~~Support person from Regents (Sally & Ken agreed to provide technical assistance support to board) ~~who can should be asked to~~ look at the alignment of the goals, the strategic plan and work plan and provide a training for the board – so you don't miss something. He noted that the Director is entitled to confidentiality about data. Scott also added that he made editorial changes to the evaluation instrument the Bboard approved, and that it has been sent to RIDE for distribution. Board members commented that they had not received the amended document, and Scott said he would send it again. It was re

3. Language and Communication Guidelines for Instructional Practices – Tabled until next meeting due to absences of two board members.

#### 4. Awareness and Updates on Student Achievement

The Director noted that this will be a part of every meeting and work session; that while NECAP is required by the state, we have signed on with NWEA for testing because it measures growth; we have to look at accommodations; many Sschools for the Ddeaf around the country have adopted NWEA.

Discussion ensued about the NWEA report that was distributed to the board – very confusing as to where to look and how to find the growth target. The Director assured the Bboard that Mary Smith will be able to explain it all at the next meeting, but that she is very excited that RISD has adopted NWEA because it provides a justified growth model.

Mary Pendergast spoke to questions about students with multiple disabilities and how it is addressed; growth is measured through IEP goals and alternate assessments; NWEA allows us to test where started and moving forward.

Amy Roche questioned the fact that NWEA testing starts at grade 3 – why not grade 2? Mary Pendergast answered that it is very challenging for lower grades and that we were using FAIRVIEW testing for lower grades.

Much discussion ensued regarding deaf students vs. hearing students and how the culture of the school reflects the views of teachers and administrators.

Several Board members asked to be updated about the decisions tied to assessment data that the Administrative Team will make (e.g. plan for professional development for teachers, what the data mean for specific children or classrooms).

The Director talked about professional development, teacher development and student development that occurred over the past year; long-term measures to use data – connect with teacher evaluations.

#### 5. Collaborating Relationships with other Agencies

Discussion ensued about group (Grodan Center) that is interested in renting space in our new building for up to two years. It was noted that the Grodan Center is geared toward students with behavioral needs; we have at least 4 students that need a behavioral classroom. The Ccenter has agreed to provide consulting and training services to RISD in return for allowing them to rent space (they will also be paying a substantial rent). Although all Board members expressed interest to explore the option with Grodan Center, cConcerns were voiced about bringing any group into the school – and how it would benefit our students, ~~or detract from~~ align with our

Strategic Plan goals; and that caution needs to be used in making that decision...don't want RIDE telling us who goes in building. Scott Mueller noted that a Memorandum of Understanding must be formed before any group comes into the new school – to assure that our students' needs are met. It is necessary to find out if there is a legal opinion of "who can populate the building?" Board member Amy Roche expressed concerns about the Groden center and noted that BOT needs to decide the direction of the school; focus on deaf children and not worry about empty space. Jodi Merryman wondered about the nature and needs of students at the school with behavioral concerns. Mary P. indicated that the School has lost a dozen students in the last two years because they could not meet their behavioral needs. We currently have 4 students who need an alternative classroom setting, and it is necessary to grow in this area.

The Director noted that the "elephant in the room" is the fact that we need to boost enrollment at the school – bringing in other services, especially with early intervention, will help bring awareness and interest to build our enrollment. We have space and staff needs training. We have reached out to other agencies, but Early Intervention offered a play group, and Perspectives wanted to charge us for services.....Scott Mueller noted that the Board we and the Community needs to decide if we are a school or a center; suggested that Family Services of RI would be a good partner for us.

Corsino Delgado noted that we have a \$33M building, and we need to fill it with students or it could be a public fiasco; if we need to fill space with a strategic partner for a short time, where we can benefit from it, we should certainly do so. He reminded the board that the RI State Properties Committee meets only once a month, and he wants to be able to present the lease option to the committee at its August meeting; he would like to have the board's permission to do so; he also suggested that the Board be aware that RIDE or DOA can place another agency, e.g. DCYF, to fill the space. This lease option can make money for the state and students/teachers will benefit; he agreed with Scott Mueller that there is a limited amount of time that we will have control over the building; we must be proactive; one-third of the school will be unoccupied when we move in; Groden is looking at 8000sft. He suggested that the School offer a one-year contract with the option to renew for one more year.

Director noted that she is developing an agenda for 8/3 meeting; a work session in August was mentioned but not confirmed.? Mary Wambach asked that a work session be scheduled for August.

Scott Mueller: the Board needs to finalize goals for the Director in August to discuss collection of data in September.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Tabled for next meeting.....

1. Personnel re: Director's Evaluation/Goals
2. Collective Bargaining: Teachers' Contract

Motion was made by Jodi Merriman and seconded by Amy Roche to adjourn the work session at 8:37 p.m.