



MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 18, 2010

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Jon Henry, Maureen McEntee and Christine West; Cart-Shelley Deming
From RIDE: Kenneth Swanson and Andre Audette, Teacher Certification Officer

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:11 p.m. at the Dept of Administration, Conference Room B

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

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

Chairman Zellner noted that there are still two vacancies – supposed to be filled by the Resolution.

Public Comment: Dinaz Adenwalla, Union President...noted that she was here on behalf of the teacher's union and her question: "Will Director Lori Dunsmore be receiving an evaluation and who will conduct it?"

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2010 - Accepted

March 16, 2010 – Accepted as amended (pg 8, Line 7)

All in consensus to accept the minutes, including closed sessions.

Reports:

Chairperson: Travis Zellner discussed the last meeting and work session; matrix schedule from Lori...will add comments throughout the meeting. Harvey Corson commented about Board orientation meeting; wants to write a letter of thanks to RIDE

for their efforts and also wants to thank Maureen McEntee for her assistance. Harvey will draft the letter and forward to Travis. Travis also noted that he had communicated with Ken Swanson, re follow-up w/RIDE on details of Resolution and when responsibilities would be returned to the Board. Ken Swanson stated that in the beginning of June, the board will have full responsibility and authority; will be before the Board of Regents meeting in June. As far as the status on board vacancies, Commissioner wants one filled by young alumni of RISD and then another member.

Director: Lori Dunsmore noted that she will provide binders for all the paperwork she hands out to the board; to summarize her report – content mostly about Title II, work session and Board of Regents meeting. Race to Top is priority; develop local assessment, accessibility, teacher support; signed off on MOU – concerned w/accessibility for us. Much discussion ensued re Title I distribution/funding; low-performing school. The Director informed the Board that administration is discussing a collaborative with family guidance and life skills; trying to move forward with new initiatives. We would like to see an integrated classroom for PK. She noted that she was invited to the Governor’s symposium, where they stressed the importance of human resource management, evaluation and measurements, direction we are going in. Joe Fischgrund has been coming in for Professional Development and we will move forward with plans for PD in the new school. She discussed the Open House and the exhibit we had at RIHAP. Amy Roche asked about Title I status/percentage. Mary Pendergast noted that 60% of our students are Title I; after research, anticipate we will apply to be Title I school; section of RTTT funds are reserved for low-performing schools. Kenneth Swanson noted that they were asked to identify the five lowest performing schools and RISD fell into the second batch; Title I is more flexible, financial benefit. Ken will email to the Director an estimate of what our Title I funding would be. If we are eligible for Title I funds, they will be added to our school budget.

Assistant Director, Mary Smith – Noted that she has been looking at programs to see what other schools are doing; we need to attract more students. She is looking at behavior centers, life skills, middle and high school age programs; bilingual programs; family guidance programs are big key to encourage families/new students. We will have a library section for families; a center for expertise on deafness; looking at integrating PK; children of deaf adults and siblings; peer language models.....the new school will be great for these programs. Mary noted that the integrated program would help to

build relationships with families, but we would be stopping at PK for now. She discussed the Open House, report cards and summer school.

Assistant Director, Corsino Delgado – Gave a brief report re the new building – tours for next week, planning the move and vacating the Rhodes building. He noted that the financial timeline for the budget is included in the packet given to the board...would be glad to sit down with a Finance Committee when one is established; he is projecting a modest surplus. The furniture and technology is ready to go; still on schedule to be in new school for September; administration will make the move in July, contingent on the furniture being in place. He noted that the new building is technology oriented and the communication problems experienced in the past should not exist in the new school. We have a capacity for 168 students and are working on initiatives/programs to attract new students to increase our enrollment.

Sub-Committees:

- Policy Committee: There is no official committee yet.
 - Legal Policy Procedures – Lori noted that an electronic copy is available on website.
 - Policy Drafts - Members of board still looking for list of previously approved policies; in this packet only includes two policies – Protocol for Legal Services – no previous policy on this. Tabled for next meeting.

- Building Committee – Corsino gave update in his report

- Personnel Committee – No official committee – work in progress

- Budget and Finance Committee – No official committee – Corsino provided budget timeline in report.

Old Business:

- Trustee Officer Nominations – Travis Zellner noted that he cannot continue without a vice chairman.

- Vice Chairman – Mary Wambach nominated Amy Roche, who declined; second choice – Marie Lynch, who replied that she wanted to be the Secretary. Mary Wambach offered to be temporary vice chairman to help Travis in the interim; until someone else will take the nomination for V.C.. Agreed by consensus
- Secretary – Marie Lynch – agreed by consensus

- Title IIa Findings – The Director handed out copies of the staffing plan; approval; time line. She explained that 27 recall letters went out; two teachers were not recalled; notified all. Mary Pendergast noted that this was a very difficult procedure; took a lot of time and effort on everyone's part; it was an extremely involved learning process; we let the teachers know that we supported them and worked diligently to provide a plan that focuses on student needs; looked at transcripts to be sure that juniors and seniors had met requirements for graduation; built matrixes, tables, lists, demographics; looked very closely at student groupings. What was most profound is that we discovered that in the past we scheduled classes by what teachers could provide – instead of by student needs. Also, it became apparent that high school requirements to graduate were not being met and we were over-scheduled in computer technology, history and social studies. Our students are underperforming in NECAP reading, writing, math and science tests. Staff is put into one of five categories; plan was discussed with the teachers and they were offered every opportunity to meet with us, look at qualifications and ask any question of us. We went through the rubrics with Andre Audette; we wanted to have a process with 100% fidelity; we are grateful for Andre's support. The end result – what could have been a colossal blow to the school was transformed to our teachers feeling validated and important. We are confident that our staffing plan is a viable, valid plan; RIDE recommends that

we do this on a yearly basis – next time will be easier.
Harvey asked and was assured that every teacher is highly qualified and certified; appropriately placed by their status and qualifications; with this staffing plan, we could handle 15 to 20 additional students, if enrollment climbs. Staffing plan is based first on student needs; we looked at areas that are required to be proficient in literacy and language arts. Travis Zellner wanted more clarification on the plan; Lori Dunsmore asked him to email any questions to her.

- Language and Communication Guidelines Draft - Tabled
- Student Handbook Draft - Tabled

New Business:

- Board of Trustees Calendar Matrix: meetings & work sessions – already discussed
- Scheduled tour of the new building – already discussed

There was a short break at 7:45 p.m. – returned at 7:55 p.m.

Executive Session: The Board will seek to convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing:

(Atty Sara Rapport wanted to note, before going into closed session, that the Board advised both teachers that they have the right to discuss in open session, they exercised their right to discuss in closed session. The Director also exercised her right to discuss her evaluation in closed session.)

- Collective Bargaining: Teachers' Contract (RIGL § 42-46-5(A)(2) - Tabled
- Litigation re: Teacher Layoffs (RIGL § 42-46-5(A)(2)
- Personnel re: Director's Contract (RIGL § 42-46-5(A)(1) - Tabled
- Personnel re: Two Teachers (RIGL § 42-46-5(A)(1)

Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2)

- d. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Iraida Williams:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 8:10 p.m. Approved unanimously.

- e. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Amy Roche:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 10:05 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- f. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Harvey Corson:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session: Board of Trustees supports the Director's recommendation of Statement of Cause.

Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date:

II. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.