



RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

WORKING MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 4, 2010

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Jon Henry and Maureen McEntee, Carol Fay

RIDE: Andrea Castenada, Sally Arsenault

Guest: Steve Florio

Atty Sara Rapport arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Call to Order

Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:11 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf. Chair wished all a Happy New Year and welcomed Director Dunsmore back.

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes: December 7, 2010 – approved w/corrections by consensus

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- a. **In Attendance:** Travis Zellner, Mary Wambach, Marie Lynch, Harvey Corson, Westley Resendes, Jodi Merryman, Amy D Roche
- b. **Excused:** Iraida Williams, Angelo Garcia

RISD Administration Updates:

Director Dunsmore: Noted that she was glad to be back at the school; thanked all for flowers; looking forward to working with staff to focus on student needs for the next six months. She stated that she is not intending to renew her contract and will be leaving after June 30, 2011. In the meantime, she looks forward to working with RIDE to make sure there is a smooth transition for new director.

Members expressed that they are looking forward to a productive remainder of the school year and thanked her for being professional in giving advance notice, including plans for transition.

RISD Board of Trustee Updates:

Chair: Met with Andrea and Sally re: the Strategic Plan and the prospect of having a retired administrator work with the Director and administrative staff-this person will work part-time right through the summer. With respect to the Mission Statement, goals, approach to board work and the direction of school – Sally will continue to work with entire school.

RISD Strategic Plan:

- Review of recommendations – brief discussion about the meeting that took place on December 4, 2010
- Intent to finalize RISD Mission Statement – Much discussion about the wording in green (e.g. diversity vs culture; choices vs perspectives; children & families vs just families; children/adolescents vs students) on the mission statement – Members agreed that students (vs children) should be included in making choices/decisions and that wording should be changed to make very clear. The addition of another line was suggested:
- “Encouraging and supporting the choices and self-determination of students as they approach the end of their academic life”.

Also added to the Mission Statement:

“Rhode Island School for the Deaf is a critical, strategic and responsive educational center, with a commitment to educational excellence for this low incidence population”.

- Board intends to formally accept additions at next Board meeting in February.
- Board Discussion re: Functions – centered on collapsing numerous functions into 3 main ideas. The top 3 focused on were:
 1. Educational Center for Innovation and Success
 2. Comprehensive Student Assessments
 3. Family and Community Support Services

Although the Board acknowledged these ideas, they agreed to consider recommendations and/or modifications from the administrative team with the support of Sally Arsenault. Sally Arsenault noted that the mission and function

are only statements about what the school wants to be; she suggested that she could work with the administrative team to organize functions into 3 or 4 categories – which will be presented to Board at the next meeting along with the final Mission Statement. Andrea Castenada stressed that the vision for the center needs to be articulated, thinking about functions specific to the school and center as a broader vision-focus on short-term mission/critical issues that the school faces

Chair: Functions accepted as is – and cited that Education is highest priority.

Director Dunsmore left at 6:50 p.m.

BREAK: 7:40 p.m. to 7:55 p.m.

Board Development: – Member noted that we needed to finalize a Communication policy and Education philosophy. Chair noted that there are 3 members on the Policy Committee – Angelo Garcia, Amy Roche and Mary Wambach

- Work Session Schedules – Much discussion re: scheduling regular meetings (1st Tuesday of month) and work sessions (3rd Tuesday of month). Chair noted that it is not necessary for every member to attend work sessions – but we need to have certain dates scheduled regardless of agenda. Next regular board meeting will be in February – Board wants Mission Statement with additions/changes one week before February meeting. Members agreed that having public comment at work sessions is important-if they attend meetings, they should be able to communicate. Schedules for Work Session meetings will be affected by upcoming school vacations. Chair noted that adjustments will need to be made.
- Process: Making consensus decisions – Chair noted that making decisions by consensus is sometimes not possible; there are times when a Motion must be made and decisions made by vote; especially with sensitive issues, we may need to Move and Vote. Member noted that there is an issue of image – board needs to show a unified front – be in consensus – show good faith. Sally Arsenault noted that strong decisions are made in consensus, if one or two members oppose, take the time to explore their positions; they can self-excuse and the group can decide to Vote when you are really stuck.

Old Business

- Director Evaluation Tool/Data Collection: Chair voiced concern that an evaluation process is in place, but in light of the Director's nonrenewal of her contract, this process is on hold. Members voiced concern that determining evaluation processes should still be done-to help plan for the next Director. Members discussed the fact that they still needed to set-up a process for data collection (who will do it, what will be collected); and establish goals and criteria for new Director; having a process in place will help in posting and defining a job description for new Director.

Atty Rapport noted that since the Director is not seeking renewal, an evaluation is not necessary. Member answered that a process should be in place, and should be ready to go. Another member noted that the Board should define a process of evaluation in the hiring process – what the goals are and criteria to judge whether or not those goals are met.

Chair noted that he will meet with Andrea Castenada to make clear the criteria for new Director. Sally Arsenault noted that the Board should work on goals with the person who RIDE sends to help develop measurable goals. Member requested that the process should be clear and a draft job description be on the next board agenda. All agreed.

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

- c. **MOVED Westley Resendes AND SECONDED Jodi Merryman**: That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 8:35 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- d. **MOVED Amy Roche AND SECONDED Westley Resendes**: That the Board would return to Open Session at 9:00 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Marie Lynch**: That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session:

By consensus agreed that board stands by its decision of the 12/10 letter to Attorney DeCubelis re Maria Okwara.

II. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.