



## RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

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### SPECIAL MEETING – STAKEHOLDER MEETING

**Date:** April 30, 2011 - Saturday

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Minutes recorded by:** Nancy Sousa

**Minutes approved on:**

**Interpreters:** Maureen McAntee, Christine West, Jon Henry

**CART:** Shelley Deming

#### Call to Order

Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 9:10 a.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

#### Roll Call of Board of Trustees

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

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

- c. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Angelo Garcia:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 9:13 a.m. Approved unanimously.
- d. **MOVED Jodi Merryman and SECONDED Mary Wambach:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 9:51 a.m.. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Amy D Roche AND SECONDED Harvey Corson:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

**PLA Reform Model Presentation: Jennifer Smith – Chair of Transformation Office - RIDE**

Chair introduced Jennifer Smith to the audience and noted that there would be no dialog – no give and take until the Public Comment session where we will listen to what you have to say; review all communication to discuss and decide.

**Jennifer Smith:** will provide good, clear over-view and will emphasize key points, repeating much of the same information given by Andrea Castenada on 4/26/11.

1. Primary concern is the needs of the students
2. RIDE will provide technical support, the real work will be done by Board.

Ms. Smith described all four models – stressing that these are from the US Government, incorporated with BEP – We must select one of the 4 models – each identifies the parameters – doesn't tell you how to do it – every school is individually different. She stressed:

1. Focus on dramatic and rapid improvement – accelerate what we're doing to help students learn.
2. Grounding in research from highly effective schools.
3. All adults will work together to improve student progress.

Questions to be answered –

1. What are unique strengths and needs of RISD?
2. How did we get to PLA?
3. Which models are especially powerful or poorly suited to meet the needs of RISD students?

**Ms. Smith** noted that the Board makes a decision – not a vote. Will start the discussion on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and if unable to decide – will continue to May 10; the timeline=30 days from date of PLA designation, hold stakeholder meeting and 45 days to present the model chosen to Commissioner Gist – she has 10 days to accept or not – we will have 120 days to implement.

**Ms. Smith** went on to describe all four models in detail –noting that the Transformation model (3) requires a new instructional program, extended day and year; teacher placement by student needs; and an expectation of increased parent and community involvement – students must get additional time in core content areas. In reference to the Turnaround model (4), she stressed that it would require a direct replacement of 50% of staff; the BOT would determine the process by

which teachers would return – teachers would be required to provide a model lesson, go through an interview process and submit a state of commitment to the chosen model. This model may also require changes to the CBA that will have to be resolved. She agreed to answer questions from the staff and public.

Member of public rose to state his opinion on Deaf education – do BOT members have background in Deaf education and how much money is available to make these changes? Deaf students need additional funds for special services; we do not have the resources – specialists exist, but they are not free. Also wanted to know what the Board envisions the school structure in the models re leadership – where is a superintendent in our school? Chair answered that once we pick a model, then we will determine what is taking place.

**Ms. Smith** noted that there are funds available through SIGF and 103G funds – funds are distributed based on detailed written plans on competitive basis; note that there is not an endless bucket of money.

A parent in the audience stood to let Board know that she had moved her family here from another state; her daughter has an IEP and RISD was the only school that could take care of her daughter-closing the school should not be an option; many of our students have cochlear implants, hearing aids, etc...they can't go into a public school-they have a community here and would be outcasts in public schools.

Another audience member spoke re: the Restart Model – questioned whether there were any EMOs that have experience with the deaf and hard of hearing. Chair answered that if the Restart model were chosen, organizations would have to go through a bidding process; some groups have contacted us; other deaf schools have been PLA identified.

A former Board member and parent of a deaf student (formerly RISD) asked questions regarding the timeline, the Board members' educational expertise and about how much support they will get from RIDE. She also emphasized that in the development of the new program – consider 2 populations: 1. An Early Intervention program and 2. Support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing kids in mainstream.

Another member of the public asked about the impact on CBA with the Turnaround or Transformation models.

**Ms Smith** answered that they are having conversations with legal personnel regarding implications on CBA and negotiations -whichever model is selected. Chair noted that BOT has worked hard reviewing every area of concern; were given a lot of information and will have a better understanding of the implications once a model is chosen. Teachers are providing information to students to send their comments via email; have received various types of input-contacted several different agencies, canvassed the whole state to gather and review everything. A RISD teacher asked if there would also be an open discussion on 5/3 – to which the chair answered yes, and there will be a closed session to discuss impacts. Further, Commissioner Gist will make her decision to accept or not after getting feedback from Andrea Castenada and Jennifer Smith who have worked with us from the start, including PSI.

Member of public asked if the 5/3 meeting could be held in the gym because he expected there would be lots of people, including the media; to which the chair noted that he would give that consideration.

**Chair** assured all that the Board is very interested in your input – noted that the brochures were printed by RIDE and include our function, goals & mission statement – developed from stakeholder input. Again today-looking for your input to help us decide on the model to choose. We have a Spanish interpreter if anyone needs one. Each person will have three minutes to speak; if you have more to say, please communicate with us through email or written letter; Mary Pendergast is the primary contact for PLA.

**Stakeholder/Public Comments: (attached copies of public comments)**

**Motions from Executive Session: None**

**Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date: 5/3/11 general meeting**

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**II. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.