

**BOARD OF REGENTS  
FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**WORK SESSION  
Thursday, October 15, 2009  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

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**The Rhode Island Department of Education – Shepard Building  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor – Peter McWalters Conference Room  
255 Westminster Street – Providence, RI 02903**

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**Minutes**

**Members Present**

Robert Flanders, Patrick Guida, Colleen Callahan, Amy Beretta, Anna Cano-Morales, Angus Davis, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

**Commissioner's Comments**

- **RTTT/strategic planning**

The Commissioner reported to the Board that at the last meeting of the Board of Regents she had distributed a draft overview of the Board of Regents/Department strategic agenda. She reported that the Department is moving along on developing that agenda, and today she is handing out an updated version that includes draft goals and objectives. Now, the Department is working on developing strategies and action steps for each objective. Those strategies and action steps will then need to be prioritized and resourced in order to develop the strategic plan. The ultimate goal is to have performance measures for every person in the agency that drive the priorities. The group talked about how to compare Rhode Island standards with international standards and how to build a baseline to be able to determine exactly where the districts are. The Commissioner said that the Department has already begun to determine where the districts are by means of the Commissioner's visits.

- **Budget update**

Commissioner Gist reported that the Department continues to prepare the FY 2010 revised and FY 2011 budget submissions. Last week she had met with Gary Sasse to discuss cost-saving proposals for the Department and the state schools. He asked that the Department consider strategies that could be achieved through the elimination or reduction of services and savings from efficiencies realized through reorganization and attrition. The Commissioner reminded him that the Department and the state schools have offered up significant savings in previous fiscal years and assured him of our commitment to achieve additional savings. Additionally, during the meeting Mr. Sasse informed the Commissioner that the revenues in the current fiscal year continue to decline and that new proposals as well as past proposals that would achieve savings in education aid would be considered to close the budget deficit. She discussed with him the need for a funding formula to address the inequities in the current distribution of education aid. The Commissioner told the members of the Board that the budget office has provided us with a Department target for personnel, consultants, and operating and that Mr. Sasse has been assured that the Board of Regents and the Department are committed to meeting whatever budget target is given but that we need flexibility, particularly in respect to hiring positions and consultants and redirecting current resources to align with the strategic priorities and new organization. The Commissioner will keep the Board informed as new information becomes available. The FY

2010 revised and FY 2011 budgets will be presented at the next work session for review and comment. The final budgets will be presented to the Board for approval at the December 3, 2009, Regents meeting.

- **CTE regulations update**

The Commissioner told the Board that in November 2007 the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education endorsed a policy framework for career-and-technical education that included recommendations calling for significant changes to the existing system of career-and-technical programs and regional vocational schools. The major program change called for was an increase in the number, diversity, and quality of career-and-technical education programs. Since that time, there has been an even greater realization that the vocational-trade paradigm must quickly be replaced throughout the state by programs that educate and prepare all students for a range of careers involving sophisticated scientific and technological skills and knowledge and that increasingly incorporate a college-preparatory curriculum. Only in this way can the demands of industry be met and economic growth be sustained. There is also a pressing need to link all career-and-technical education programs to internationally benchmarked standards and industry needs and expectations. In addition, research has confirmed that career-and-technical education engages and motivates students by offering them applied, real-world learning opportunities, resulting in lower dropout rates and increased achievement. Such programs may incorporate a college-preparatory curriculum and use applied learning not as a substitute for rigorous academic learning but as a contextualized applied extension of it that ensures trade, career, and college readiness.

After soliciting initial input from the CTE directors, a small team has begun the work of defining the new statewide approach to CTE and capturing it in draft language for statutory and regulatory changes. This team is looking forward to input from the Regents during the November working session and will subsequently seek input from selected CTE directors and superintendents, as deemed desirable. Based on the November session and subsequent input, a draft version of new statutory language and regulations will be prepared and presented to the Regents. The regulations will be voted on by the Board to go out to public hearing during the Spring, 2010.

*The major changes in the regulations, as the small team has envisioned them, are:*

- a focus on CTE programs of study; district responsibility, which may be met through multiple-district collaboration;
- all students receive career awareness and exploration opportunities;
- CTE program standards integrated with regulations based on Regents policy (November 2007); and
- strengthened accountability provisions for continuous improvement, including program review and approval process.

There was a brief discussion about the funding of the C&T schools. This item will be brought back for discussion at the Regents November work session and then for approval on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**School visit update**

Here is a list of the district visits, roughly in order of occurrence:

Chariho  
Ucap  
Blackstone Academy  
Davies  
Jamestown  
North Smithfield  
Highlander Charter  
School for the Deaf  
Cumberland  
Scituate  
Central Falls  
Narragansett  
Barrington  
Newport  
Coventry  
Middletown  
Johnston  
Compass  
East Providence  
Lincoln  
North Kingstown

- **Educator “cut” scores**

Commissioner Gist said that she has received many thoughtful comments and much feedback regarding the proposal to elevate entrance requirements into educator-preparation programs and acknowledged that, in some cases, raising the cut scores of the basic-skills tests to the proposed levels causes great concern. However, after listening to concerns and reading the feedback, she has made the decision to stand behind the original intent and raise Rhode Island scores to the higher mark. The scores will be raised incrementally over a two-year period. Regent Cano-Morales suggested that the Department do a joint op ed on the increase of the passing scores, and everyone agreed.

- **AFT innovation fund grant**

The Commissioner reported that RIAFT has one of 7 proposals funded by AFT to work in partnership with Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket to develop a state-of-the-art performance-based teacher evaluation and support system. This system will be based on the RIPTS and the proposed Educator Evaluation Standards and Professional Code of Responsibility and will include multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, including measures of student learning, as well as a support system that includes a peer assistance and review component, professional development, and training. Copies of the AFT news release were distributed.

As per RIGL 42-46-5(a) 1 & 2, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. into executive session. The meeting reconvened to open session at 12:50 p.m.

## **BOR Work Session Minutes**

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Regent Guida reported that during the executive session there were no votes taken and moved to have the minutes sealed.

MOVED and SECONDED: THAT, the minutes of the Board of Regents Executive Session of October 15, 2009, be sealed.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

### **Legislative update/Approval of motion on binding arbitration**

As part of her legislative update, Commissioner Gist reported as follows:

- The Senate and House are still on schedule to reconvene on Wednesday, October 28, 2009 and Thursday, October 29, 2009.
- Committee hearings could be scheduled the week of October 26 – 29. As of today, no committee hearings have been scheduled on legislation.
- She is scheduled to meet with House Finance Chairman Steven Costantino and Representative Laurence Ehrhardt, from North Kingstown. Representative Joy Hearn and Senator David Bates from Barrington have joined her on school visits.

Legislation on binding arbitration continues to be a top priority. She met this week with Senate Majority Leader Daniel Connors and has a meeting scheduled with the House Majority Leader next Thursday, October 15, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. at the State House, to discuss binding arbitration. In discussions with the League of Cities and Towns, RISSA, and the R.I. Association of School Committees, the following has been determined:

1. R.I. League of Cities and Towns – adamantly opposed to binding arbitration. The league has sent draft resolutions to all city/town councils in the state opposing binding arbitration. As of today, the league has received more than 20 resolutions opposing binding arbitration from city/town councils. No city/town councils have supported the legislation.
2. R.I. Association of School Committees – adamantly opposes binding arbitration. The association has also sent draft resolutions to all school committees in the state opposing binding arbitration.
3. RISSA (R.I. School Superintendents Association) – has adopted a resolution recommending that any proposal on binding arbitration must be thoroughly vetted prior to consideration. RISSA suggests that the process should include a fiscal-impact statement, a legal analysis, and a review of relevant data on binding-arbitration impacts.

Commissioner Gist then presented to the Regents for approval a resolution opposing binding arbitration:

**THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Respectfully Requests that the Rhode Island General Assembly Oppose any, and all, Binding Arbitration Legislation currently being considered for Teacher Contracts.**

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously.**

**Nutrition Standards**

Commissioner Gist presented the agenda item to the Board for discussion. She explained that it will be brought forward for consideration at the Board's November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. On February 5, 2009, the Board of Regents approved the R.I. Nutrition Requirements 2009 (RINR), which are based on the recommendations of the USDA 2005 Dietary Guidelines. RINR is a companion piece to the previously developed Nutrition Guidelines for School Vending & A La Carte Foods. Approval of Version 2 of the RINR would enable districts to phase in the whole-grain aspects of RINR. The intent of this revision is to improve the nutritional quality of school meals while ensuring that children will continue to find the meals appealing and continue participating in the school-lunch program.

**Adjourn: 1:20 p.m.**