

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

WORK SESSION MINUTES

Thursday, March 18, 2010

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

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

Attending: R. Flanders, B. Shimberg, A. Cano-Morales, A. Davis, C. Callahan

The meeting convened at 11:35 p.m.

Commissioner's Comments

RTTT Update – Commissioner Gist reported that the Race to the Top interview in Washington on Wednesday was part of a very competitive process. She said that she felt that the core interview team from Rhode Island (Governor Carcieri, Tom Brady, Betsy Shimberg, MaryAnn Snider, and David Abbott) was very well prepared and that all went well. She also thought that the co-team of delegates (Mary-Beth Fafard, Gordon Fox, Teresa Paiva-Weed, David Cicilline, Daniel McKee, Dr. Davida Irving, Judy Jenkins, Maureen McEntee, Steve Smith, Dr. Julie Nora, Mike Crowley, Neil Steinberg, Angus Davis) that had met with legislative leaders was also a great help. The states should be notified about who will receive the first round of funds within the next two weeks.

Common Core Update – Commissioner Gist invited RIDE staff member MaryAnn Snider to the table to talk about the Common Core Standards. The Commissioner told the Regents that, after much revision, the highly anticipated release of the first official public draft of the *Common Core Standards* was released for review and feedback on March 10. The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have been developing the *Common Core Standards*, similar to our grade-level expectations or GLEs/GSEs in mathematics and English language arts, which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Overall, the most recent draft reflected significant progress. Rhode Island participated in a conference call with other states and heard widespread agreement about this perspective.

Ms. Snider told the members of the Board that there is still significant work to be done before they meet their goal of delivering a new draft that responds to all the feedback by next week. This draft promises to include grade-specific standards. RI's other feedback requested:

- Grade- and content-specific achievement descriptions that will clarify what should be emphasized when writing curriculum and test blueprints;
- A plan for how the standards will be reviewed and revised over time;
- Clarification on what it means to "adopt" the standards. Does each state need to conduct an alignment study and then make adjustments OR do we need to adopt the standards "as is"?; and
- Guidance around interpretation of standards. Any standards require significant materials and conversations to interpret more precise meaning across that document.

- Some of the language is quite broad. The goal of having common standards will not be met if each state provides its own understanding of intent behind the language. Rhode Island is reconvening its Engagement Committee later in March to develop a roll-out plan to gather statewide feedback on this final draft. More specifics will be provided when we are given timeframes next week.
ESEA Reauthorization – Commissioner Gist told the Regents that a review and discussion of the reauthorization of ESEA would be on their next meeting agenda.
Charter Schools – The Commissioner also said, that at the next meeting, RIDE will present to the Board an update on charter schools. Staff has been working with groups that want to bring their applications to the Board for approval. Part of that process includes meetings with the communities to gather information.
Update on Commissioner Visits/Secondary School Regulations Implementation - To review, the Regents adopted the Secondary Regulations in 2003 and enhanced them in 2008. The purpose of the Commissioner’s review process is to support and identify levels of implementation of the Secondary Regulations in each district and/or school, with full implementation required by June 2012. This review process analyzes district implementation of the R.I. Diploma System, including the multiple measures of the proficiency-based graduation requirements, personalization, and district-wide literacy/numeracy strategies. Then, at least three times over the last four years districts/schools were provided detailed feedback regarding their progress toward meeting the 2012 implementation deadline. Over the last few months, the RIDE team has visited 35 school districts (41 high schools and associated middle schools) to gather the most current implementation data.

Arts Standards for Approval

The Commissioner reminded the Regents that at their February 4 meeting, they approved the Rhode Island Arts Grade Span Expectations for public hearing, which was held on March 11. She then introduced Rosemary Burns to talk about the hearing. Ms. Burns told the Board that the public hearings on the Arts Standards had been held and approximately 35 people had attended, with 16 speaking. Overall, there were no negative remarks about the standards. Speakers were enthusiastic about using them.

Discussion of CTE Regulations

The Commissioner reported that following her last update on the Career and Technical Education regulations, department staff met with career and technical education constituents from across the state and received additional feedback on the proposed regulations. That feedback is being considered, and the draft regulations are going through a final revision and will be brought back to the Board for discussion next month.

Discussion of Changes to ELL Regulations

Ms. Gist told the Board that the next two agenda items are being presented to give the Regents the opportunity to reopen ELL and Special Education regulations. The first item concerns the Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners. The Department needs to make the proposed changes to clarify language, terms, and exit criteria for the field. These changes, while important, are minimal. In total, 4 clarifying alterations are being recommended. They concern adding the term English Language Instructional Program to the definition section, updating some of the links, modifying the assessment requirements, and updating exit practices. These modifications were developed in full partnership with the ELL community, particularly the local directors. At the next Board meeting, Regents will be asked to approve the recommended changes to be promulgated for public comment.

Discussion of Changes to Special Education Regulations

Next, the Commissioner reviewed the changes to regulations governing the Special Education Regulations. The proposed changes are as follows:

- Incorporate federally mandated language that passed after the reauthorization of IDEA and after Rhode Island adopted its new rules and regulations;
- Reconcile the federal regulation regarding Parentally Placed Private-School Students with the Rhode Island General Law that was passed after Rhode Island adopted its new rules and regulations; and
- Address inadvertent omissions and errors. The major omission is related to informing parents of their rights regarding confidentiality and records destruction.

The item will be brought back to the Board for approval for public hearing on April 1st.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.