

# BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Work Session  
Tuesday, September 14, 2010  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

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

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## MINUTES

Attending: R. Flanders, P. Guida, C. Callahan, A. Beretta, A. Cano-Morales,  
B. Shimberg, A. Davis, K. Forbes

The meeting convened at 1:45 p.m.

Chairman Flanders congratulated Regent Angus Davis on his award as Rhode Island's Innovator of the Year.

### Educator Evaluation Update

Commissioner Gist reported that the work on Rhode Island's educator-evaluation model is well underway and asked RIDE staff member Mary Ann Snider to provide the Board with an update. Ms. Snider told the Board that progress is being made by the three districts developing their own model (Westerly, Coventry, Chariho), and "great strides" are being made to merge the AFT Innovation Model with the Rhode Island model. There will be a more in-depth presentation made at a future work session.

### Changes to Regulations (for Public Hearing) – English-Language Competency Test

Commissioner Gist explained that under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the USED has recognized a need for states to ensure that all educators are competent in the English language. In response, RIDE has begun to draft regulations to help ensure that all educators are competent in English. Those regulations will incorporate the following:

- All Rhode Island teachers must be able to read, write, and speak the English language with sufficient competency to allow them to teach effectively and to prepare their students for success.
- Working in partnership with community groups and with educators in the field, RIDE is drafting these regulations to make it clear when and how districts will determine whether a teacher is competent in English.
- The Board of Regents will be asked to vote on these regulations in the coming months. The regulations will require that school districts have a process in place to ensure English-language competency among their educators.
- All rights of educators, including rights under applicable federal and state civil rights laws, will be protected.

- RIDE will establish procedures to receive feedback and to closely monitor the implementation of these regulations to ensure fairness to all.

### RTTT Work Plan

Commissioner Gist told the Board that RIDE has developed a 90-day operational plan that addresses the governance and management structure, communication strategy, recruitment of talented individuals, guidelines and clarity on program and budget reporting, effective engagement of LEAs in Scope of Work development, and building effective relationships with USED. This operational plan attends to the immediate need to complete three essential deliverables to USED: LEA Scopes of Work (due November 22, 2010), state Scope of Work (due November 22, 2010), and a revised budget based on submission of all clarifying information (due November 16, 2010). Additionally, we have completed answering 47 budget questions for USED and will be completing budget negotiations on September 16, 2010, in Washington, D.C., and we have secured "pro bono" support to assist us on communication strategies, human capital, and engagement with LEAs on Scope of Work.

### Charter School Protocol

RIDE staff member Jennifer Smith joined the Regents and Commissioner at the table to talk about the proposed charter-school protocol and timeline. She reviewed the Charter School Performance handbook that outlines the proposal for a comprehensive charter-school performance review, the Charter Template (framework for the legal "contract" that is entered into between the Board of Regents and the local public charter school), and the Performance Management Process that chronicles the key activities of the Board of Regents, RIDE, and charter-school applicants and holders over the course of a five-year charter term. Ms. Smith talked about the performance goals - which enable charters to be vanguards of Rhode Island's public-school system, supplement federal and state requirements, and weigh student outcomes most heavily. She also talked about the comprehensive review: Is the school's educational program an academic success?; Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?; and Is the school a viable organization?

### Budget Targets

Commissioner Gist and RIDE staff member Carolyn Dias spoke to the Board about the budget instructions and targets. The Commissioner explained that the state Budget Office distributed budget instructions and targets to agencies during the month of August; consequently, RIDE has officially started the FY 2011 revised budget and FY 2012 budget-preparation cycle. The enhanced Medicaid-reimbursements rate recently enacted by Congress was less than what the state was expecting, causing a \$38.4 million deficit in the current year; for FY 2012, preliminary estimates show a deficit of more than \$300 million. \$200 million of that deficit is due to the loss of federal ARRA funds, again principally the enhanced Medicaid money. Because of these projected budget deficits, agencies have been requested to submit constrained budgets that achieve across-the-board reductions in their general-revenues appropriations. Ms. Dias told the Board that the agencies are being asked to develop a current-service budget and a budget based on a 1.33% reduction.

She then reviewed the FY 2011 proposed adjustments and targets in detail for ACES, Davies, the R.I. School for the Deaf, the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center, the Central Falls School District, and education aid. Commissioner Gist told the Board that, over the next several weeks, RIDE will be analyzing and prioritizing its investments to achieve savings and will recommend for the Board's review reasonable budget proposals that are aligned to the strategic plan and that will allow RIDE to carry on the reform work. Additionally, RIDE will work with the state schools and require them to conduct a similar review of resources to ensure that they provide budget proposals that fund only essential services and that identify savings that can be used to achieve their budget targets. Commissioner Gist reminded the Regents that school districts and charter public schools were reduced by 3.8%, or \$26.3M, in the current year and that in many communities, local contributions decreased by an additional 5% because of the change in the MOE statute. Her budget-proposal recommendation will not only include savings, but also the appropriate funding levels for schools that will be necessary to maintain the momentum of our reforms.

#### Executive Session

As per RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) and (2), the meeting recessed at 2:45 p.m. into Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 3:10 p.m.

Chairman Flanders reported that during Executive Session there were no votes taken and no decisions made.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the minutes of the Executive Session be sealed.**

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously.**

**Adjournment: With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**