

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



Enclosure 2c  
March 1, 2012

**Work Session**

**RIDE**  
**Thursday, February 16, 2012**  
**11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Attending:** Patrick Guida (presided as chairman), Lorne Adrain, Robert Carothers, Karin Forbes, Betsy Shimberg

**Absent:** George Caruolo, Carolina Bernal, Colleen Callahan, Mat Santos

**The meeting convened at 11:35 a.m.**

Vice-Chairman Guida presided over the meeting, welcomed everyone, acknowledged that the meeting was a Work Session of the Board of Regents duly noticed, and asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

**Approval of Agenda**

On a motion duly made by Regent Forbes and seconded by Regent Shimberg, it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education accept the day's agenda.

**Vote:** 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** P. Guida, L. Adrain, R. Carothers, K. Forbes, B. Shimberg

**NAYS:** 0

**Commissioner's Report**

**Visit to the White House - ESEA Flexibility Request**

Commissioner Gist started by sharing that a week ago that day she was in Washington, D.C., for the announcement of the states that received waivers from ESEA/No Child Left Behind. Due to a change in its guidance, the USDOE has extended the submittal deadline for the next round of requests from February 21<sup>st</sup> to February 28<sup>th</sup>.

In exchange for the new flexibility that is providing, USDOE has asked states to agree to raise academic standards, improve accountability, and undertake reforms around teacher effectiveness, which are steps that R.I. has already taken. The main area of focus for R.I. has been on the development of how we are going to handle accountability and intervention into schools that have been identified as needing support.

She then shared a quote from the President:

If we're serious about helping our children reach their potential, the best ideas aren't going to come from Washington alone. Our job is to harness those ideas and hold states and schools accountable for making them work.

She went on to share how very pleased she is by the level of participation and the great feedback from the BOR and the education community at large, and, based on that, RIDE is confident that our request will help us as we work to accelerate all schools toward greatness.

### **NECAP Results**

Last Friday, RIDE released the 2011 NECAP scores and the 2011 graduation rates.

The results were mixed, with:

- significant improvements in our middle schools in both mathematics and reading;
- no significant changes in elementary schools or in high-school reading; and
- an alarming decline in our already low high-school mathematics scores, an area of concern.

There were, however, some examples of excellence in schools and districts across the state, and RIDE invited several educators to speak at the news conference to discuss how they achieved their gains.

Joining us at the news conference were folks from:

- Central Falls High School (which improved its graduation rate from 54 percent to 71 percent);
- the North Smithfield School District (which improved its writing scores by more than 20 percentage points at all school levels); and

- Blackstone Valley Prep and The Learning Community, both of which made dramatic improvements in mathematics.

She also recognized the other schools and districts that made gains this year, which is indicative of the great work happening in school districts across the state.

### **Innovation Powered by Technology Conference**

Commissioner Gist reported that, on the previous Saturday, the Innovation Powered by Technology Conference was attended by about 300 people, which included educators and representatives from charter public schools, nonpublic schools, community-based organizations, higher education, and some members of the BOR.

She shared how grateful she was for the overall feedback, which is indicative of the fact that everyone enthusiastically engaged with the national speakers, who are experts on innovative uses of technology, on ideas about blended learning, and ideas about the use of technology to transform teaching and learning in R.I.

### **Virtual Learning**

One of the things that R.I. needs to do as a state is to make sure we are clear about how we want virtual learning be used in our state.

In the coming months, RIDE is going to start talking with the BOR about developing regulations around virtual learning common elements and about sharing the vision and developing virtual- education regulations.

### **Grace School Mayoral Academy**

The Grace School Mayoral Academy, an affiliate of Meeting Street, is on track for a September 2012 opening with 119 students serving the communities of Providence and North Providence.

The Grace School Mayoral Academy proposal has been out for public comment; one hearing has been held, with the next one being held on February 29<sup>th</sup>.

At the next BOR meeting, RIDE will be bringing to the BOR an overview of the two hearings and, in the following weeks, the full report on the public-comment period and the panel review of the application.

### **The Learning Community Charter Public School**

The Learning Community Charter Public School has requested the opportunity to expand by 16 students in order to fill some gaps in its grade configurations.

This growth will require a technical amendment to its charter.

If approved, the Learning Community will fill the additional 18 seats through this year's lottery.

### **Chairman's Remarks**

Vice-Chairman Guida took the opportunity to welcome Jim DiPrete, former Chairman of the Board of Regents.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Career and Technical Education Regulations**

Since the last BOR meeting, RIDE staff has met with center directors, career-and-technical education teachers, and students to ensure that we have collected their ideas and concerns and, whenever possible, addressed them through discussion or in the regulations.

RIDE has received letters of support from the Providence Career and Technical Academy, Warwick Area Career and Technical Education Center, Woonsocket Career and Technical Education Center, the MET, and the Davies Career and Technical High School.

Next, Andrea Castañeda summarized for the BOR the most recent changes that were made to the draft regulations as a result of her recent meeting with the center directors, career-technical education educators, and students, where she corrected their misconception that the new regulations were being watered down and were a step away from program quality.

#### **Health Regulations**

The Health Regulations, which are promulgated with the Department of Health, are up for renewal, and RIDE will be looking for BOR to approve them for public hearing at the March 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Changes that need to be incorporated into this year's renewal are the inclusion of the bullying policy, the concussion policy, and dental screening.

Andrea Castañeda and Jackie Ascrizzi went over the proposed draft regulations and answered questions from the BOR on health issues affecting our schools.

#### **Recovery High School Pilot Program**

Finally, Commissioner Gist gave an update on the Recovery High School Pilot Program, modeled on a New Hampshire program, which will be up for BOR approval at the March 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

The Recovery High School Program under consideration will be run by the Providence Center, the only applicant, and will provide educational and substance-abuse recovery services for 20 youth.

Districts must refer students to the program, and enrollment into the program will be strictly voluntary by the student.

Since no one had any further questions, Vice-Chairman Guida asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Regent Shimberg and seconded by Regent Forbes it was

**VOTED:** That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting.

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: P. Guida, L. Adrain, R. Carothers, K. Forbes, B. Shimberg

NAYS: 0

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.