

**BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 23, 2006**

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 4:10 p.m.

In Attendance

J. DiPrete, C. Callahan, B. Camara, K. Forbes, P. Guida, G. Grove, and M. Paradis

Public Remarks

There were no public remarks.

Chairman's Remarks

- Chairman DiPrete reported that he and Commissioner McWalters had attended the Governors PK-16 Council meeting on February 17th.
- The Chairman spoke at the Senate Finance Committee budget hearing on Feb. 22nd. He distributed printed copies of his remarks to the Regents.

Commissioner McWalters told Board members that at the Governor's PK-16 Council meeting, the council received a report on a study conducted by "Jobs for the Future" (a Boston based company) on dual enrollment. The study showed that about 16-17% of Rhode Island high school students are involved in dual enrollment programs. The Governor may consider providing money to support dual-enrollment programs.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Meeting Minutes of the January 26, 2006 meeting, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Members to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf

Chairman of the State and Charter Schools Committee Gary Grove, told board members that his committee had met earlier to discuss the appointment of Dr. M. Kathleen Ellis to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees. Dr. Ellis is currently the Director of the Adaptive Physical Education Program and the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Rhode Island. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Grove recommended Dr. Ellis's appointment.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Appointment of Professor M. Kathleen Ellis, Ph.D. to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees, as Recommended by State and Charter Schools Committee.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Members to the William M. Davies, Jr. Career & Technical High School

Once again, Mr. Grove addressed the Board and recommended, on behalf of the State and Charter Schools Committees, the appointments of Larry T. Gemma, Robin Ann Smith, and Harvey C. Simms, Jr. to the Davies School Board of Trustees.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Appointments of Larry T. Gemma, Robin Ann Smith, and Harvey C. Simms, Jr. to the Davies School Board of Trustees, as Recommended by the Board of Regents State and Charter Schools Committee.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Mr. Grove told board members that his committee had approved earlier the appointments of two candidates to the Central Falls' Board of Trustees. However, this item will come for approval before the full board at the March meeting when the Chairman of the Central Falls' Board of Trustees is available to answer questions.

Budget Update

Commissioner McWalters noted that topics brought before the Governor's PK-16 Council closely mirror topics that are currently also before the Regents. He told board members that the next Council meeting will focus on issues related to special education. The Commissioner and members of the Board expressed concerns about the definition of the roles of the respective tables. The Commissioner said that after having made two presentations to the Council, he was unsure about what work will follow those presentations and how the work will be assigned. The topics that are before the Council are RIDE and Regents' work, but he noted that the Council could become more active once a project manager is on board. Members of the Board discussed how the work of the Council was bringing forward important education issues needing to be addressed and the importance of the Regents "staying connected". Chairman DiPrete reported that the Senate Finance Committee meeting went well and he expected that questions during the House Finance Committee meeting scheduled for next month would delve into more detail. He stressed the need for good preparation for that hearing. He noted that many governors around the nation have focused on education, and it's important that contacts between RIDE and the Governor's office remain open.

Deputy Commissioner Abbott told board members that the Capital Budget Hearing on March 2nd will raise significant issues for RIDE. Two capital proposals in the Governor's recommended budget would finance the new building for the School for the Deaf and parts of the Governor's mathematics and science initiative. He talked about the following budget initiatives:

- Investment of \$7 million in Smart Classrooms
- Professional Development Center at RIC
- C.E.S. System at RIDE (This would finance the 3rd year of a 5-year initiative to develop a data warehouse connecting RIDE with the districts).

Mr. Abbott also noted that the House Finance Committee Hearing on March 9th would focus on where the Regents' budget request diverges from the Governor's budget recommendations. He said the legislators will want clarity on the Regents' position on state aid. The Regents had asked for targeted aid - \$4 million for high-school reform to all districts; and \$2 million for PS&I, which wasn't funded. The budget adds \$200,000 for PS&I, which is actually a replacement of a legislative grant for Tolman High School. He said there will also be questions about the mandated cut of 13 FTEs, which he said should be considered program cuts, not cuts in personnel.

Chairman DiPrete introduced to the board Senate Legislative Analyst, Laurie J. Brayton, who distributed a copy of the department's FY2007 Budget Request FY2006 Supplemental.

Commissioner McWalters suggested that until the Joint Committee resolves the issue of a funding formula and tax policy, the issue of aid cannot be resolved. He expressed concern that questions might be raised about removing some children from the health-insurance system, and we must advocate for them getting health care. He is also concerned about the cuts in FTEs, which may leave us with programs that have no personnel to run them. The Regents, he said, are not against trying to control costs, but they should make it clear that if FTEs are cut, some programs will also be cut. The Chairman asked that the Regents' Finance Committee meet before March 9th to review the budget and the issue of FTEs.

Regents' Committee Reports

Administrator & Teacher Quality - Regent Forbes reported that the Administrator and Teacher Quality committee is currently working on the Professional Teaching Standards, and Teacher Education Renewal and that progress is being made in developing principal certifications, but more work needs to be done at the committee level before it comes to the full Board.

Progressive Support and Intervention - Regent Guida requested that the Board add to its next agenda a discussion of the development of standards for schools Committees in conjunction with the Rhode Island Association of School Committees

(RIASC). Commissioner McWalters said that the PS&I Committee should frame this charge to RIASC. Once RIASC drafts standards, the Board can ask them to adopt and promulgate them, which would give the Commissioner greater standing if he has to impose conditions on a School Committee during an intervention.

CASP Committee - Regent Callahan reported that the Committee on Academic and Student Programs has revisited every section of the High School Regulations and will work on a cleaned-up draft of the Regulations next week. The task is to make the Regulations more inclusive of Middle Schools. The revised Regulations will have to be sent out for public hearing. Commissioner McWalters said he welcomes the inclusion of Middle Schools in these Regulations, particularly as he will need to respond to Districts that are contemplating a return to the K-8 structure.

Chairman DiPrete welcomed Shane Lee, a student at Central High School and a student representative at the board and said he would expect occasional reports to the board from Mr. Lee. He said a second student representative, chosen by the statewide Student Council, would be asked to also sit at the table.

Legislative Report

Commissioner McWalters introduced RIDE Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Legislative Relations, Andy Andrade to the full Board. Mr. Andrade distributed a Legislative Report, and explained the internal process of collecting and prioritizing legislation impacting education.

Executive Session

As per R.I.G.L. 42-46-5-(2), the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. for Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 6:10 PM

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

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Adjourn

With unanimous consent the meeting adjourned immediately at 6:12 p.m.