

Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education  
Minutes of November 06, 2008

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

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**In Attendance:**

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

**Public Remarks**

**David Byrd** – Dean of the School of Education, University of Rhode Island spoke to the group about the Alternative Route to Certification Programs and his opposition to the proposal in its present form. He requested that the program be offered only for shortage areas and requested that substitute language be added in section d.,2., ii., as attached.

**Larry Purfill** – President of NEARI urged the Regents to amend the proposal on alternative certification to limit the program to shortage areas only.

**Sarah Morenon** – PPSD Librarian spoke to the group about proposed changes to the BEP. She reminded the Regents that, “What is given up is hard to reclaim”. She spoke about the importance of school libraries and librarians, art and music and the necessity of protecting these programs as the work on the BEP goes forward.

**Pete Adamy** – University of Rhode Island and former elementary school teacher – Urged the members of the Board to reconsider approving an alternate certification program for grades 3-6. He cited the complexity of teaching at the elementary level, especially the instruction of literacy in the early grades.

**Chairman Remarks**

Chairman Flanders addressed the members of the Board and meeting attendees reminding the group that, as Regents, “We do everything we can to improve kids’ performance – that is the focus of the Board of Regents.”

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Flanders presented the minutes of the October 1, 2008 meeting and clarified the following: Under Chairman Remarks, second paragraph, Rick Landau was not principal at the Textron Charter School; he was the Director of Foundation Partnership, ConnectEdu, Inc.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Minutes of the October 1, 2008, as amended.**

**VOTE: Approved unanimously.**

**Approval of Members to the Davies Board of Trustees**

RIDE staff member, Keith Oliveira presented the agenda item and told the Board that the nominated candidates had been screened by the Davies Board of Trustees and interviewed by the Board of Regents’ State and Charter Schools Committee. He then reviewed their backgrounds and presented them for the full Board’s approval.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Appointments of Mr. Paul L. Ouellette, Jr.; Carolyn Hébert; and Lori Ann McIntosh to the William M. Davies Career and Technical School Board of Trustees, as Recommended by the Board of Regents’ State and Charter Schools Committee.**

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously.**

### Approval of Alternate Certification

Department of Education - Director of the Office of Educator Quality and Certification Paula Jo Gaines and staff member Lisa Foehr presented the agenda item for consideration. Ms. Gaines told the members of the Board that in order for the State of Rhode Island to encourage the development of alternative pathways into the teaching profession, regulations governing the conditions for the development and approval of proposed alternative routes to certification programs are needed. Ms. Foehr gave a brief summary of the responses from the public hearings held on September 23, 2008 and October 2, 2008 and reviewed components of other state alternative certification programs already in existence. The Regents discussed elements of the proposal including limiting the programs for educators serving grades 3-12 (because of concerns about the expertise required to teach young children to read) and the requirement for setting a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of "B" (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) to assure that candidates are highly qualified in their field. RIDE Director of Educator Quality, Paulajo Gaines told the group that through the program approval process, the state will be able to make decisions on the training of a candidate as per the RI Program Approval Standards. She also urged the Regents to require a 3.0 in their field for traditional education preparation programs; and to establish a uniform program length. It was decided that the length of the program should be at least 5 weeks.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Adopt the Proposed Standards for Alternative Route to Certification Programs, as discussed and amended.**

**VOTE: Approved 6-1 (Regent Callahan voted against the motion)**

### Approval of FY 2010 Budget

Regent Shimberg presented the agenda item on behalf of the BOR Finance Committee. She told the members of the Board that this budget was a tough budget to construct in difficult financial times; that over the past five years, RIDE has delivered on every budget cut requested in the Governor's instructions, but this year, there is no way to make additional reductions without giving up on the Regents goal of maintaining and improving public education for every child in the state. Therefore, The Board of Regents Finance Committee is presenting a budget that reduces education spending and achieves efficiencies, but does not meet the Governor's request for a third consecutive year of double-digit cuts. It recognizes the state's "stretched" fiscal environment, but sustains the essential core services for education, focusing on the Regents' priorities: to implement the Secondary Regulations, strengthen educator quality, revise the Basic Education Program and redefine the scope of management rights, develop standards for early childhood programs and works towards an education funding formula and improved state efficiencies. RIDE Director of Finance, Carolyn Dias, distributed the Board of Regents FY 2010 Budget Submission, as attached. Ms. Dias then reviewed the budget, as follows:

- Total budget presented - \$937.8M, which provides a \$6.6M increase over the FY 2009 enacted budget.
- Provides level funds in education aid and allows for a nominal \$1.3M increase to Central Falls.
- Includes \$2.6M to accommodate increase in growth and other data updates for charter schools.
- Increases school construction aid projections by \$6.7M for recently completed projects.
- Reduces the Department's budget by \$1.7M and includes unprecedented reductions for Davies and Deaf of \$1.6M.
- Postpones the plan to expand the Paul Cuffee Charter to the high school grades; and freezes enrollment at the Paul Crowley Met Newport Campus.

The group talked in more detail about the specific cuts to the School for the Deaf, statewide efficiencies, charter schools and Central Falls.

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves and Transmits the Regents' FY 2010, as Presented.**

**VOTE: Approved Unanimously.**

#### **Approval of FY 2009 Revised Budget**

Ms. Dias reviewed the highlights of the FY 2009 Revised Budget, as attached. She told the group that the revised 2009 budget saves \$4.1M as follows: Department work force reductions resulting from reorganization and turnover \$(651,616); Davies Career and Technical school personnel savings \$(156,000); Deaf turnover savings \$(77,863); Non-public textbook program expansion \$110,000; Group home education aid \$330,000; Charter school savings \$(755,905); and School construction savings \$(2,856,156).

**MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves and Transmits the FY 2009 Revised Budget Proposal, as presented.**

**Vote: Approved Unanimously.**

#### **Discussion of Savage Appeal**

Deputy Commissioner, David Abbott reported to the members of the Board that there hasn't been a briefing schedule determined yet for the Savage appeal, but as soon as it has been scheduled, the department will join in filing an Amicus brief along with RISSA.

#### **Commissioner's Search-Update**

Regent Davis updated the group on the progress of the Commissioner's search. So far there have been six public forums held to get public input on the qualifications of a new Commissioner and four more have been scheduled. Mr. Davis also told the group that he, Regent Beretta and RIDE Chief of Staff, Clark Green have reviewed the proposals from search firms and had chosen Ray Associates from Iowa to conduct the Commissioner's search. The Department of Administration has endorsed the selection and work is now being done on revising a contract to be reviewed by the Department of Administration for signature. There has been \$75,000 allocated in the budget for the search. Ray Associates will be at the next meeting of the search committee and attend the next Board of Regents meeting. Additionally, the search committee will forward a profile of a new Commissioner for Board of Regents approval.

#### **Adjournment**

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.