

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MEETING HELD AT:
Warwick Career and Technical Center
575 Centerville Road
Warwick RI 20886
Thursday, September 2, 2010 4:00 p.m.

Minutes

At 3:30 p.m., members of the Board of Regents met at the Warwick Career and Technical Center for a tour of the school. The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m. following the tour.

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

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Gist recognized Peter Horoschak, Superintendent of Warwick Schools, and the principal of the Warwick Career and Technical Center, William McCaffrey, and thanked them for hosting the meeting.

Budget Update - The Commissioner gave the group an update on the progress of the current budget season. She said that RIDE is still receiving budget instructions and targets from the state budget office, details of which will be shared with the Regents at the September 14 work session. She went on to say that it is going to be a very challenging budget process for RIDE this year in light of the state-projected deficits for FY 2011 and the deeper deficits in FY 2012. Therefore, RIDE has scheduled multiple meetings over the course of the next six weeks to work through the various budget scenarios and options. All of that information will be presented to the Board for review and feedback at the October 7 Board meeting and October 21 work session. The Regents are scheduled to approve the budget on November 4.

Education Jobs Bill Update - Next, Commissioner Gist spoke to the group about the Education Jobs Bill. She reminded the Regents that this law will bring \$32.9 million to Rhode Island and that these funds are intended to help districts retain education jobs over the next two years. She emphasized that using the \$32.9 million in Edu-Jobs funds intended for Rhode Island to fill statewide budget shortfalls, particularly in areas not related to public education, is not in keeping with the spirit of the legislation. She stated that while she recognizes that the state is facing broad fiscal challenges, she does not feel that this burden should be borne solely by the state education system. The General Assembly will ultimately decide whether the Education Jobs funds should be offset by cuts in state aid to education. She said that RIDE will incorporate proposals on how Rhode Island can best use the Education Jobs funds in the FY 2012 budget recommendations, which will be presented to the Board as part of the budget process.

School Opening Update - Commissioner Gist reported that the opening of school had gone smoothly and that she had visited Cranston and Woonsocket.

New Charter School Update - The Commissioner reported successful openings for both new charter schools - the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts and the Greene School. Both are fully enrolled, with just one opening at Trinity, and both are in solid financial shape to cover costs, as outlined in their budgets.

RTTT Update - The Commissioner then spoke about the collaborative efforts that have taken place to develop an innovative Race to the Top plan that was recognized as one of the best in the country. She noted Chairman Flanders's remarks at the recent news conference on Race to the Top: "When we unite, we produce great results for our children." She said that, as educational policy leaders, we must inspire everyone in our communities to believe and commit to carrying out the Rhode Island plan: "It belongs to all of us. In moving forward, every participating district will need to commit to work tirelessly and courageously in carrying out our plan, from the planning phases to its completion four years from now." She told the Regents that, over the next two weeks, RIDE will be completing negotiations with USDOE to finalize Rhode Island's budget, and all 10 state RTTT winners are expected to attend a meeting in Washington, D.C., on September 16, 2010, to go over grant requirements and to participate in a recognition ceremony with Secretary Duncan and others. The USDOE intends to obligate the funds by September 30, 2010.

Update on Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools -

- Central Falls High School:
 1. Completed second full week of professional development 8/23 - 8/28;
 2. Staffing completed, with the exception of one science position (interviews taking place tomorrow);
 3. Freshman class welcomed by home visits conducted by teachers and co-principals, and distribution of T-shirts recognizing freshmen as the "class of 2014";
 4. Orientations for each grade level held during the last two weeks in August; welcome-back barbecue held on 8/21;
 5. Comprehensive School Reform plan, required under the parameters outlined in the protocol for transformation of schools, was submitted on time (August 13, 2010);
 6. School Improvement Grant funds application also submitted on 8/13; and
 7. Community stakeholder meeting was held on 8/17.
- Providence (Sanchez, Williams, Sackett, Woods/Young)
 1. Throughout the summer, school leadership teams from each school conducted gap and root-cause analysis to determine the needs that will generate strategies for turnaround approaches;
 2. Professional development was held for leadership teams with Dr. Joe Murphy, of Vanderbilt University (on root-cause) and Kati Haycock, of The Education Trust;
 3. Differentiated professional development at each site took place through 8/30; and
 4. Community stakeholder meeting was held on 8/30, at which principals from each campus reviewed their developing plans for transforming their schools.

Public Remarks

During public remarks, the following people addressed the Board:

- Elaine Budish, representing the Education Justice Council – spoke to the members of the Board about the Council work on the High School regulations. She said that, while the Council supports the concept that a high-school diploma “must mean something,” she expressed concerns about how the high-school regulations will impact special education students. She questioned how we can ensure that students get the supports they need to meet the graduation requirements, and she asked what will be done about students already in the pipeline who won’t be able to meet the standards. She urged the Regents to put district supports in place and to provide for “alternative credentials” for those students who can’t meet the standards.
- William McCaffrey, principal of the Warwick Career and Technical Center – thanked the Regents and Commissioner for visiting the center and for their support of career-and-technical education. He then gave the group an oral history of both career-and-technical education in the state and the Warwick Career and Technical Center specifically.

Chairman’s Remarks

Chairman Flanders recognized Mayor Avedesian and Superintendent Horoschak and thanked them for attending the meeting.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Regents Meeting and Executive Minutes of August 5, 2010; and Board of Regents August 12 and August 25, 2010 Committee Meetings on High School Graduation.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the August 5, 2010, Meeting Minutes and Executive Minutes; and the August 12 and August 25, 2010, Committee Meetings on High School Graduation, as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

APPROVAL ITEMS

Approval of Members to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees
Commissioner Gist presented the two candidates nominated to fill the remaining two vacancies on the nine-member Board of Trustees for the Rhode Island School for the Deaf for Regents’ approval. They are: Westly Resendes, a recent graduate of the School for the Deaf, and Angelo Garcia, the founder and director of operations at the Segue Institute for Learning, in Central Falls. The Commissioner told the Regents that RIDE staff has reviewed these candidates, supports their selection as trustees, and confirms that they fulfill the representation intended for this Board under Rhode Island General Laws.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the Appointments of Members to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Members to the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees

Commissioner Gist presented the candidates for the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center Board of Trustees. They are: Kenneth Bright, Rob Gallo, and Teny Gross.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve Appointments of Members to the Metropolitan Career and Technical Board of Trustees, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Central Falls Support Staff Contract

The Commissioner explained to the members of the Board that Rhode Island General Laws require that the Board of Regents concur with the approval of the Commissioner regarding the Central Falls School District and Central Falls noncertified union personnel collective-bargaining agreement. She then presented the new agreement for consideration. She said that she finds the new agreement to be fair, equitable, and fiscally responsible, and, on that basis, she recommends that the Board of Regents concur with her recommendation. Regent Anna Cano-Morales abstained from the discussion and vote on this item.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Concur with the Approval of the Commissioner in the Approval of the Central Falls School District-Central Falls Noncertified Union Personnel Collective Bargaining Agreement, as Attached.

VOTE: Approved [Regent Anna Cano-Morales abstained from the vote on this item.]

Approval of ELL Regulations

Commissioner Gist presented the next agenda item for the Board's consideration: the approval of ELL regulations. She reminded the Regents that this item was brought before the Board for review on July 22 and August 5. The Commissioner invited RIDE staff members Andrea Castañeda, Bob Measel, and Emily Klein to speak about the proposed regulations and answer any questions that the Board might have.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Changes to the Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Protocol for Intervention in the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Again, Commissioner Gist reminded the members of the Board that this agenda item, the *Protocol for Intervention in the Lowest-Achieving Schools*, was brought to the Board for their review in July and August. Two public hearings occurred (June 22 and 23); the majority of concerns centered on the hiring process for schools identified as persistently lowest-achieving, the value of assessment scores, the definition of "the

graduation rate” (duration of time it takes students to complete high school), and perceived negative language about teachers and collective bargaining in general. The Commissioner then asked RIDE staff member Jennifer Smith to speak in more detail about the proposed changes.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Protocols for Intervention in the Lowest-Achieving Schools, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Endorsement of Principles Regarding Career and Technical Education

The Commissioner asked RIDE staff member Andrea Castañeda to answer any questions that the Board might have.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Endorse the Principles Regarding Career and Technical Education, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Spanish World Language Test

The Commissioner told the members of the Board that, as per discussions on August 5, RIDE issues a Bilingual/Bicultural endorsement to elementary, secondary, and special-subjects teachers. This endorsement allows teachers to provide instruction to students in Spanish and other languages. Up to now, RIDE has used two ETS Praxis tests to demonstrate language proficiency and Spanish-language content knowledge. Both tests are specified in Regents’ regulations for the Bilingual/Bicultural endorsement. Now, ETS has replaced the two tests with a single new test. Adoption of the new test necessitates three changes to the Bilingual/Bicultural endorsement regulations:

1. Elimination of the Spanish Productive Language Test and Spanish Language Content Knowledge Test;
2. Replacement of the Praxis World Language Assessment to fulfill the requirement of demonstrated Spanish-language proficiency and knowledge of Spanish language; and
3. Adoption of the cut score of 168 established by the ETS multi-state validation-panel study for the World Language Spanish Assessment for the Spanish Bilingual/Bicultural endorsement.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Replace the Spanish Productive Language Test and the Spanish Language Content Knowledge Test with the Praxis World Language Assessment and the Cut Score of 168 for the Demonstration of Spanish Language Proficiency in this area, as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Report on BOR High School Graduation Requirements Committee

RIDE staff member Andrea Castañeda updated the Regents on the work of the Board of Regents Committee on High School Graduation Requirements. She told the Regents that a more in-depth review would be presented at the September 14 Board work session. Regents discussed the major issues: Can a student's "lack of proficiency" on the state exams prevent a student from graduating, even if he/she successfully achieves/completes the other requirements?; and, what can be done about those districts that do not prepare students to meet the graduation requirements?

Adjournment: With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Agenda for Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Board of Regents is a work session scheduled on September 14, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., at the Department of Education, Room 501. Additional information about the agenda is available in the Office of the Commissioner of Education, Shepard Building, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903. The Shepard Building has been deemed accessible to those with disabilities by the State Building Commissioner. Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired or needing other accommodations, please call 401-222-8468 or RI Relay 1-800-745-5555 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.