

# BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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## WORK SESSION

Thursday, November, 18 2010  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 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, A. Davis, B. Shimberg, F. Caprio.

### Commissioner's Comments

- Report on RTTT - 50 LEA Scopes of Work were reviewed and accepted for approval and will be sent to USDOE on November 22, 2010; two LEAs were added: Little Compton and Chariho; SEA Scope of Work will be completed and sent to USDOE on November 22, 2010; two Race to the Top positions have been filled: RTTT Grants and Finance Officer and RTTT Senior Systems Data Administrator for Educator Quality. The next step following November 22, 2010, is to work with LEA teams to continue implementation of the Educator Evaluation System, the study of the standards, and curriculum-development work.
- Revenue Estimating Conference – November estimating conference projected increases in revenue for 2011 and 2012; the state deficit is down \$4.7 million; however, a \$290-million deficit is expected in FY 2012.
- Lowest-Achieving Schools Update – Providence: The school-reform plans and SIG G application have been reviewed; the Department is engaged in the final vetting of the Reciprocal Obligations/EMO document to ensure legal sufficiency, and, upon final approval of that document, the Department will provide PPSD with guidance for next steps.

Central Falls: Commissioner Gist told the Regents that she remains very concerned about the progress of the transformation efforts at Central Falls High School. She said that the school is experiencing some successes, including the Study Island math program that is showing increases in math proficiency, the growth of the number of students served by the Guide to Success Multiple Pathways program, and the launch of a school wide vocabulary initiative. To increase this success, teaching and learning must be the focus of all energy, and, as such, the RIDE Transformation Office will increase its presence in the school and will expedite responses to any requests for additional support from the Superintendent, high-school leaders, and teachers in the building.

- Private Funding – Commissioner Gist told the Regents that she has been working to bring private funding for education into the state. She will be in Washington during the next month to meet with prospective funders.
- Multiple Pathways - RIDE's Multiple Pathways (MP) initiative is to ensure increased access for all learners to educational and career-training opportunities that lead to college and career readiness. The MP system design will provide learners with different levels of access to career-related programming, depending on their academic and career goals and needs. Students may enroll in a structured program of study through career-and-technical (CTE) programs, choose a work-related opportunity such as internships or apprenticeships without enrolling in a CTE program of study, enroll in a foundation course through a CTE program, enroll in a work-readiness skills program, etc. The design is to ensure that all students leave high school (or adult-education programs) with the academic and work-ready skills to successfully complete additional academic or career/work training programs. As part of the RIDE reorganization, the Secondary, Adult Education, and Career and Technical Education offices merged into a single Multiple Pathways office. The physical and collaborative integration of these offices supports the development of a comprehensive system of pathways that provide the appropriate access and support through a continuum of linked learning opportunities. The office staff has collaboratively worked to develop a draft definition of pathways and is currently researching existing best practices from national models that will guide this work, and RIDE is currently working with external partners, including adult-education agencies, CCRI, and DLT, to coordinate statewide efforts to ensure that there is strong support for this system and to ensure the sustainability of the program. The industry sectors will be chosen collaboratively to ensure that they are in economically sound and viable industry sectors and that they provide rigorous, effective, and equitable educational and career instruction. The Office of Multiple Pathways has engaged key stakeholders early on in the development process and has scheduled regional meetings through the educational collaboratives to discuss the initiative with superintendents, middle- and high-school principals, and CTE directors. A virtual charter public school is a key component of the pathway system that will greatly increase student access to flexible learning schedules and programming/course work that is unavailable in district curriculum; it will provide opportunities for accelerated learning and dual-enrollment opportunities, and the system will prepare students for the virtual-learning opportunities that are becoming a prevalent instructional-delivery strategy. The convergence of several state initiatives through DLT and RIDE presents an exciting opportunity for the development of a multiple-pathway system that ultimately leads to all learners in Rhode Island having access to high-paying, high-skill-level jobs and careers.

### Review of Changes to High-School Graduation Requirements

Commissioner Gist reminded the Regents that their work over the past three months has focused on three major issues:

- Ensuring that the regulations do not create student-level consequences for system-level issues;
- Reviewing and clarifying the partially proficient requirement, ensuring that it is ambitious yet fair and attainable; and

- Clarifying the role of diploma-system approval status and the implications for districts that do not attain full approval.

She then referred the Regents back to the last full Board meeting, at which they were presented with a design that included a response to all three of these issues. She emphasized that the proposal does not water down Rhode Island's expectations for student performance. On the contrary, the design affirms the Board's commitment to rigorous academic expectations by affirming the conjunctive nature of the multiple-measure system and by making it clear that NECAP performance is a required element. The proposal in no way backs off of expectations that LEAs must implement all the required elements of the regulations. RIDE staff member Andrea Castañeda walked the Regents through the document (enclosure 2 of the November 18, 2010, work session). She reviewed, in detail, pages 2 through 7 and noted changes, as per the Regents' comments and discussion. The Regents talked about the intent of the regulations as pertaining to the weights of the "three legs of the stool" and, more specifically, about an alternative means of determining proficiency (in place of the NECAP). The Regents also discussed how ELL students and students with IEPs can demonstrate proficiency and/or growth. Next, Commissioner Gist asked that the Regents affirm the proposed design so that RIDE staff can begin to draft regulation language for consideration on December 2. The regulations will then be brought back for further discussion at the December work session with a vote for public hearing on January 6.

#### Review of Charter Public School Proposal

Commissioner Gist reported to the Regents that all technical work around the revisions to the regulations are complete and will be brought forward for approval for public hearing on December 2. RIDE staff member Jennifer Smith reviewed the process for the development of the charter-public-school regulations and the changes made since the last work session.

#### Review of Policy Statement on Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation

Commissioner Gist referred the Regents to the draft Policy Statement on Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation as presented in their packages. She reminded the Regents that the policy before them is for review, discussion, and revision, in the context of recent, well-publicized bullying incidents and suicides related to sexual orientation, and that it will also bring RIDE into compliance with U.S. Department of Education requirements. Commissioner Gist then asked Regent Shimberg to speak to some of the revisions that she had asked to be made to the proposed policy statement. Regent Shimberg spoke about the need to strengthen the proposed policy statement and to increase the reference to "gender identity" to include gender expression. The Regents questioned if there is a need to include a protection against retaliation and if this policy statement included bullying in general. The Regents also decided that, once passed, the statement would be sent out to all districts to be adopted. The approval of the policy statement will be edited, as per the discussion, and brought back for a vote on December 2.

There was no Executive Session.

The work session adjourned at 1:15 p.m.