



Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee

The Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee is an active voice in advocating that all students receive superior educational services enabling each student to achieve optimum success throughout the school years and into the world of adulthood.

December 18, 2014

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

RI Parent Information Network
1210 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI 02920

Present: Edward Angilly, Sharon Bissonnette, Eileen Botelho, Ann Brockmann, Cris Brodeur, Tarin Byrne, Jennifer Connolly, Cherie Cruz, Lori DiPina, Susan Donovan, Gillian Elliott Pearis, Deborah Garneau, Jennifer Gladding, Patti Hien, Barbara Irons, Laura Laviano, Trish Martins, Pamela O'Brien, Douglas Pierson, Maria Silvestri-Golotto, Sharon Ursini-Quimby

Absent: Cindy Duckworth*, Joanne Eichinger*, Rosemary Gomes*, JoAnn Nannig*, Robin Pacheco*, Mary Pendergast*, Brian Quigg*, and Elizabeth Santana

**denotes that prior notice was given regarding absence*

RIDE/RITAP Attendees: David Sienko, Beth Pinto and Phyllis Lynch

Call to Order, Welcome, and Agenda Review: The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm by Sue Donovan. Sue welcomed all members and invited all to introduce themselves to the presenter, Phyllis Lynch of RIDE.

Announcements:

Sue Donovan announced:

- Flyer about RI presenters bureau from Dept. of Health offering trainings for youth with disabilities

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes of October 16, 2014: motion to approve minutes by Trish Martins; seconded by Doug Pierson. All approved. Minutes accepted
- Minutes of November 20, 2014: motion to approve minutes (with noted changes) by Maria Silvestri-Golotto; seconded by Edward Angilly. All approved. Minutes accepted (with noted changes)

New Business:

Presentation by Phyllis Lynch, Ph.D., Director of Instruction, Assessment & Curriculum at RI Dept. of Education

Dr. Lynch provided an overview of the new state assessments- PARCC and NCSC including:

- The Purpose
- The Design
- The Policies
- The Accessibility Features for all students
- The Accommodations for Students With Disabilities and English Language Learners
- Frequently Asked Questions

Telephone (401)222-4600 **Fax** (401)222-6178 **TTY** (800)745-5555 **Voice** (800)745-6575 **Website:** www.ride.ri.gov

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Dr. Lynch's presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Director's Report:

1. Guidance issued on communication for students with hearing, vision, speech disabilities and in correctional facilities

The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, along with the U.S. Justice Department Civil Rights Division, released [new guidance](#) concerning effective communication for students with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities in public schools. Secretary Arne Duncan and U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder today announced the release of a [Correctional Education Guidance Package](#)

2. Board of Education approves for public comment regulations on dual enrollment

The Board of Education approved for public comment proposed [regulations](#) on dual enrollment. The purpose of the regulations is to expand early college access for all Rhode Island students, particularly traditionally under-represented students; to reduce the amount of time and expense required to earn a postsecondary degree; and to promote partnerships between secondary- and postsecondary-education institutions. The regulations state that "no low-income students shall be denied access to concurrent or dual-enrollment coursework on their inability to pay course-related fees," although mechanisms to provide financial support for these students are not currently addressed in the proposed regulations. I will let you know when we have scheduled public hearings on these regulations.

3. Rhode Island commended for progress under Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

The U.S. Department of Education has posted [Year 2 summary reports](#) on the progress that states have made under the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge. The reports show that more children with high needs gained access to high-quality early learning and development opportunities in states that have received this grant. The reports also show that states are working to identify what the early childhood education workforce should know and be able to teach young children and on aligning those core competencies to professional development opportunities and postsecondary-education course offerings. Among the 14 grant-winning states, Rhode Island is one of the 11 that has incorporated all seven components of an effective quality rating and improvement system for early-childhood programs. The report specifically commends Rhode Island for "providing significant support to early learning and development programs that are committed to continuous quality improvement" through our Program Quality Improvement grants.

4. Rhode Island receives federal Preschool Expansion Grant; goal is to have 60 state-funded preschool classrooms by 2019

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded Rhode Island a grant to add prekindergarten programs in the seven highest-need communities in Rhode Island: Central Falls, East Providence, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

With funding from this grant, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) will expand the Rhode Island Prekindergarten Program from the current 17 sites to a total of 60 sites by the 2019-20 school year. The funds from the grant will increase access to preschool for children in high-need communities and will help ensure that the programs are of high quality.

5. Report shows PARCC field test was successful, informative

PARCC Field Test: Lessons Learned, a report released last week, shows that the spring 2014 trial run of the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments went well, that PARCC states used feedback to make adjustments and improvements, and that the testing experience for students was largely positive – for example, students were successful with keyboarding, understood directions, and found the computer-based tests to be engaging.

The report also shows that school and district test administrators and coordinators thought the test manuals should be streamlined and that the test-delivery platform worked well but could use some adjustments to simplify some of the procedures.

To learn more about the field test experience and how its findings and recommendations are influencing the 2014-15 administration of PARCC assessments, you can access the full report, which is available online at:

<http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/field-test-lessons-learned.pdf>

5. RIDE has issued the following three Commissioner's Decisions:

Revocation of student's provisional acceptance to regional career-technical education school is reversed on the basis of ambiguity relating to the school's definition of "passing all eighth-grade classes."

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2014/016-14_P. Doe v Davies 101414.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2014/016-14_P._Doe_v_Davies_101414.pdf)

Regional career-technical education school's decision to deny student's promotion to tenth (10th) grade due to course failures is upheld.

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2014/017-14_F Doe v Wm. Davies Jr. CTHS 110314.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2014/017-14_F_Doe_v_Wm._Davies_Jr._CTHS_110314.pdf)

Siblings who attend West Warwick schools but reside in Coventry must be enrolled in the Coventry school system.

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2014/018-14 In The Matter Residency of Students W. Doe 110314.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2014/018-14_In_The_Matter_Residency_of_Students_W._Doe_110314.pdf).

6. ED Announces the Performance Partnership Pilots Program - Five Federal Agencies Collaborate on Better Outcomes

Over 5 million 14- to 24-year-olds in the U.S. are out of school and not working. In many cases, they face the additional challenges of being low-income, homeless, in foster care, or involved in the justice system. In response, five federal agencies are coming together today to offer a new opportunity to help communities overcome the obstacles they face in achieving better outcomes for these "disconnected youth," as well as those at risk of becoming similarly disconnected from critical social institutions and supports.

For the next 100 days, states, tribes, and municipalities can apply to become a P3 to test innovative, outcome-focused strategies for achieving significant improvements in educational, employment, and other key outcomes for disconnected youths. This initiative is one of the more promising and exciting opportunities to move the needle on improving outcomes for the nation's young people.

P3 allows new flexibility under federal statutes, regulations, and other requirements to overcome barriers, and align program and reporting requirements, thus enabling applicants to propose the most effective ways to use these dollars. For example, a state, local, or tribal government could propose to blend Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth formula funds and adult education funds to create a more integrated and effective job-driven training system that eliminates barriers to employment and ensures disconnected youths are equipped with the skills employers need. In addition, pilots will receive start-up grants of up to \$700,000. For details, please go to:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/11/24/2014-27775/applications-for-new-awards-performance-partnership-pilots>.

7. Hasbro Announces Toy Box Tools

Hasbro announced a new website which is the result of a collaboration with the Rhode Island Autism Project. Toyboxtools (<http://toyboxtools.hasbro.com/>) is the new website Hasbro launched with the help of the Autism Project which includes Visual Supports (Playbooks and Video Modeling) so all children, including those with Autism and other disabilities can have access to play experiences. The web site has play scenarios at three different levels and the popularity of the site has gone viral. Please share this exciting information with your teachers and parents.

8. SSIP Update

OSCAS has completed the Stakeholder input period in the SSIP process with a briefing for the Curriculum Directors on December 11th and a RIDE Staff Briefing on December 16th. The feedback has been helpful and confirmed the target area for SSIP data and infrastructure focus. The OSCAS Team will now begin the writing process for submission on April 1, 2014.

5. Mary Hagan Retires

Long time team member of OSCAS, Mary Hagan has retired from RIDE effective December 12, 2014. Mary was with RIDE for 24 years and most recently provided administrative support to the Dispute Resolution Center.

Old Business:

Advisory Time: Social Emotional workgroup discussed drafting a letter that represents RISEAC's opinion about the importance of including Social Emotional Learning in RIDE's new strategic plan.

Public Comment: None

Motion to adjourn made by Ann Brockmann and seconded by Tarin Byrne. All approved.

Meeting was Adjournment: 7:55 pm