



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

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

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.

January 15, 2015

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

RI Parent Information Network
1210 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI 02920

Present: Angilly, Edward, Bissionnette, Sharon, Botelho, Eileen, Brockmann, Ann, Brodeur, Cris, , Connolly, Jennifer, DiPina, Lori, Donovan, Susan, Duckworth, Cindy, Garneau, Deborah, Hien, Patti, Nannig, JoAnn, O'Brien, Pamela, Pacheco, Robin, Pendergast, Mary, Quigg, Brian, Santana, Elizabeth, Silvestri-Golotto, Maria, Ursini- Quimby, Sharon

Absent: *Byrne, Tarin, Cruz, Cherie, *Eichinger, Joanne, *Elliott Pearis, Gillian, Gladding, Jennifer, Gomes, Rosemary, *Irons, Barbara, *Laviano, Laura *Martins, Trish, *Pierson, Douglas

**denotes that prior notice was given regarding absence*

RIDE/RITAP Attendees: Beth Pinto, David Sienko, and Dr. Susan Wood

Call to Order, Welcome, and Agenda Review: The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm by Sue Donovan. Sue welcomed all members to the meeting and the presenter, Dr. Susan Wood of RIDE.

Announcements:

Sue Donovan announced:

- Meeting with Commissioner rescheduled looking at February dates.
- College Forum - No fee Saturday March 7th at Providence College
- National Secondary Training Technical Assistance Center Transition Capacity Building Conference, Online Applications - March 12-13, 2015.

Updates:

- Jane Slade will give an update on recent Transition Training
- RIDE will send the GRADS 360 *draft* in a PDF format for all RISEAC members to review and give feedback by Friday January 23rd.
- RIDE final submission of GRADS 360 due by January 28, 2015.

Deborah Garneau announced:

- National Secondary Training Technical at Roger Williams – each high school developed their own plan and it will be student structured.

*****Congratulations*****

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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To Pamela O'Brien son and Sue Donovan daughter who were accepted to the Youth Speakers Bureau.

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes of December 18, 2014: motion to approve minutes by Pamela O'Brien; seconded by Ann Brockmann. All approved. Minutes accepted.

New Business:

- Heather Heineke responded to the letter on PARCC/NSCS frequently ask questions sent by Patti Hein and the assessment committee. Heather would like the RISEAC members' feedback by January 23rd. Feedback from the members by emails through list serv. assessment committee will summarize and it will be sent to whole committee.
- Presentation by Dr. Susan Wood/RIDE –SPP/APR
Dr. Wood provided an overview of the GRADS 360 including:
 - FFY data
 - SPP/APRDr. Wood's presentation was followed by question and answer session.

January 2015 Director's Report: David Sienko

1. RIDE develops policy, issues statement on data privacy

RIDE is a trustee of a great deal of data and information about the performance and achievements of students attending public schools in Rhode Island, and take seriously the responsibility to protect the personal privacy of all students. Among the data RIDE possesses are records of student performance on statewide assessments. Rhode Island is now a member of a multi-state assessment consortium called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC. All PARCC member states share a commitment to protecting the privacy rights of all students. To that end, the PARCC Consortium states, together with legal counsel, developed a Data Privacy and Security Policy to ensure that the administration of PARCC assessments complies with all state and federal laws and regulations. The guiding principles of the policy are: States retain responsibility for and control over their data. Neither PARCC nor PARCC contractors will share student data with any outside entity, including the federal government. States must give permission to PARCC and PARCC contractors in order for them to access any personally identifiable information – and PARCC and contractors may access data only for the specific purposes that the PARCC states define. The Data Privacy and Security Policy applies not only to PARCC member states but to all PARCC contractors as well. Federal and state laws and regulations have, over time, established comprehensive security policies and procedures to protect individual-student level data. A brief description of these policies with links to further information is outlined below.

The federal **Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA)** went into effect in 2000 and was amended in 2013. COPPA is particularly applicable to PARCC testing because it protects the privacy and confidentiality of online child or student information. The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE), along with schools and districts, is working with companies to provide online support to parents and students such as parent portals, web-based homework help, and diagnostic screening and assessment. As RIDE works to develop this support, COPPA ensures that schools, districts, and the state can share only student information that is relevant to a specific educational purpose. Therefore, the companies RIDE is working with cannot use any student information for commercial, research, or other purposes. For more information, visit: <http://www.coppa.org/>

COPPA was preceded by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974** (FERPA), which prohibits the disclosure to a third party of a student’s “protected information.” This restriction applies regardless of whether information is conveyed by hand delivery, verbally, fax, mail, or electronic transmission. As with assessments such as PARCC, FERPA regulations require schools and school districts to use “reasonable methods” to ensure that teachers and other school officials obtain access only to those records in which they have legitimate educational interests. For more about FERPA, visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/ferpa>

The Rhode Island [Educational Bill of Rights](#) became law in 1991. This law further articulates the rights of students regarding the privacy of their educational records, including the right to have their records kept confidential and not released to any individual, agency, or organization without prior written consent of the parent, legal guardian, or eligible student, except to the extent that the release of the records is authorized by the provisions of 20 U.S.C. § 1232g or other applicable law or court process. Similarly, the Rhode Island [Access to Public Records](#) act (Rhode Island General Laws, 38-2) specifies that certain records “shall not be deemed public,” including records “the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy,” RIGL 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b), and records...required to be kept confidential by federal law or regulation or state law.” RIGL 38-2-2(4)(S). See: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title38/38-2/INDEX.HTM>

Finally, RIDE has reiterated the commitment to privacy and security by developing a [Data and Management Policy](#) to ensure that RIDE securely maintain all student data in RIDE’s possession and control, that RIDE provides safeguards for all personally identifiable information, and that is stored and used all data in complete accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

In short, RIDE is committed to collecting and retaining accurate data about education in Rhode Island, using data wisely to improve teaching and learning, and protecting the privacy rights of Rhode Island students and their families.

This policy statement, and an assurance letter from the leaders of the member states in the PARCC consortium, are posted here: Protecting Data Privacy Link:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Protecting%20Data%20Privacy.doc> PARCC State Chiefs Assurance

Letter:<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/PARCC%20State%20Chiefs%20Assurance%20Letter.pdf>

2. Changes to certification of new special educators go into effect January 1

Significant changes were promulgated two years ago (in 2012) that affect the certification of *new* special educators. Beginning this month, January 2015 the following changes will be in effect: For *new* educators, RIDE will issue Elementary Special Education Teacher Grades 1-6, Middle Grades Special Education Teacher Grades 5-8, and Secondary Education Teacher Grades 7-12 in place of the Elementary/Middle Special Educator certification or Middle/Secondary Special Educator certification. Also for *new* educators, anyone wishing to become certified in special education will have to also hold general-educator certification. Currently certified educators who hold a special-educator certificate will continue to be able to renew the same certificate. Educators who allow their certificate to expire will be held to the changes upon a request to reinstate the expired certificate.

3. Quality Counts award Rhode Island a ranking of 13th among all states, up from 31st in 2011

Education Week released its annual report on educational progress and policies in all states, Quality Counts. This year RI attained an overall ranking of 13th among the states. RI’s previous overall ranking was 17th, and in 2011 RI’s ranking was 31st in the country, so RI has made progress over the past four years. RI received especially high marks (7th in the country) in the area of school finance, both for the adequacy of RI expenditures on education and for equity. RI also achieve high marks based on the performance of our students on NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress), particularly for the improvements in both mathematics and reading over the past ten years. RI received low marks regarding equity gaps (48th in the country on grade-8 gaps in NAEP, based on poverty) and regarding

RI's graduation rate. Quality Counts 2015 also includes a special section on Early Education, on which Rhode Island ranks 32nd in the country. RI has this low ranking because of our relatively low enrollments in full-day preschool and full-day kindergarten and because of a gap in preschool enrollment based on income. Thanks to RI's Preschool Expansion Grant, full-day kindergarten grants, and the Exceed Initiative to support quality improvement in early learning schools and programs RI is poised to make dramatic improvements in early education.

4. Strategic Planning Update

The 26 members of the [team](#) that will write RIDE's next strategic plan for public education in Rhode Island will discuss the process for developing the next strategic plan, the activities they will engage in to continue gathering information and feedback throughout the process, and the steps they will take to complete their work by the end of June. The team will present its final plan to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Education for approval. The team will base its initial work on the results of the statewide education [survey](#); 10,150 Rhode Islanders participated in the survey, which was completed last month.

5. U.S. Departments of Education, Justice issue guidance of rights of English learners

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice released joint [guidance](#) reminding states, school districts and schools of their obligations under federal law to ensure that English-learner students have equal access to a high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential. In addition to the guidance, the Departments also released additional tools and resources to help schools in serving English-learner students and parents with limited English proficiency:

- a fact sheet in [English](#) and in [other languages](#) about schools' obligations under federal law to ensure that English-learner students can participate meaningfully and equally in school;
- a fact sheet in [English](#) and in [other languages](#) about schools' obligations under federal law to communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand; and
- a [toolkit](#) to help school districts identify English-learner students, prepared by the Education Department Office of English Language Acquisition. This is the first chapter in a series of chapters to help state education agencies and school districts meet their obligations to English-learner students.

This is the first time that a single piece of guidance has addressed the array of federal laws that govern schools' obligations to English learners. The guidance recognizes the recent milestone 40th anniversaries of *Lau v. Nichols* and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), as well as the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. The EEOA, similar to *Lau*, requires public schools to take appropriate action to help English-learner students overcome language barriers and ensure their ability to participate equally in school.

6. College for Every Student to provide Closing the Gap awards to five low-income middle schools, high schools

[College For Every Student](#) is a nonprofit organization committed to helping underserved students get to and through college ready to enter the 21st-century workforce. CFES currently supports more than 20,000 students in 200 rural and urban K-12 schools in 27 states and Ireland by providing a framework that allows schools to customize the implementation of three core practices (mentoring, leadership through service, and pathways to college) proven to help students develop essential skills for college and career success. College For Every Student (CFES) has received funding to support five low-income

schools for [Closing the Gap](#) awards, a three-year program that will help underserved students become college and career ready. RIDE will select five schools for Closing the Gap awards as part of our commitment to help one million more low-income students attain college degrees by 2025. We invite you to circulate award information to eligible middle schools and high schools in your network, and encourage them to [apply](#) by March 1.

7. SSIP Presented to ICC

The OSCAS Team provided the final presentation for stakeholders to the Interagency Coordination Council today. The discussion was interesting and helpful in informing the process. This concludes the stakeholder input portion of the SSIP. The OSCAS team will begin the writing process for the April 1st submission.

Old Business:

- Presentation by Phyllis Lynch, Ph.D., Director of instruction, Assessment & Curriculum at RIDE.
- Dr. Lynch provided an overview of the new state assessments –PARCC/NCSC.

Public Comment: None

Motion to adjourn made by Pamela O'Brien and seconded by Eileen Botelho. All approved.

Meeting was Adjournment: 7:40 pm