



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.*

**May 14, 2015**

**6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

RI Parent Information Network  
1210 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI 02920

**Present:** Edward Angilly, Eileen Botelho, Ann Brockmann, Cris Brodeur, Tarin Byrne, Jennifer Connolly, , Susan Donovan, Cindy Duckworth, Joanne Eichinger, Gillian Elliott Pearis, Deborah Garneau, Jennifer Gladding, Rosemary Gomes, Patti Hien, Barbara Irons, , Trish Martins, , JoAnn Nannig, Pamela O'Brien, Robin Pacheco, Douglas Pierson, Brian Quigg, and Maria Silvestri-Golotto, Sharon Ursini-Quimby

**Absent:** Sharon Bissonnette\*, Cherie Cruz, Lori DiPina\*, Laura Laviano\*, Mary Pendergast\*, Elizabeth Santana, \*denotes that prior notice was given regarding absence

**RIDE/RITAP Attendees:** David Sienko & Beth Pinto

**Call to Order, Welcome, and Agenda Review:** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Sue Donovan. Sue welcomed all members, reviewed the agenda.

#### **Announcements:**

- Sue Donovan reviewed details for the upcoming June 18<sup>th</sup> dinner meeting at Luigi's and asked members to complete their meal choices for the event
- Deb Garneau updated the progress on next week's Dare to Dream event for which there are now 836 registrants
- Doug Pierson informed members about the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee's event Saturday May 23, 2015 at the Cranston Central Library- a video presentation "How Difficult Can This Be? The F.A.T. City Workshop: Understanding Learning Disabilities"
- Sue Donovan noted that the date has been set for RISEAC's strategic planning session at Save the Bay: Saturday September 19, 2015 8:30 – 3:30

**Old Business:** By-laws were reviewed; discussion took place related to term limits for members. **Motion** by Sharon Ursini-Quimby, **seconded** by Edward Angilly that in the event a position on the committee (both required roles & parent positions) cannot be filled appropriately at the end of a term, then that individual may continue to serve another term provided that there continues to be at least 51% of the committee comprised of parents of students with disabilities. All approved; motioned passed.

**Approval of April 2015 RISEAC Meeting Minutes** – motion to approve minutes with changes noted by Edward Angilly; seconded by Douglas Pierson. All Approved. Minutes Accepted.

**Director's Report:**

**May RISEAC Director's Report**

**1. Rhode Island School for the Deaf requests superintendents' participation in brief survey**

As part of its planning for improved services to school districts and to building the capacity of Rhode Island to better serve deaf and hard-of-hearing students statewide, the Rhode Island School for the Deaf is undergoing a comprehensive self-study across all departments.

**2. RIDE issues Commissioner's decisions; on residency-(sent out to list)**

Student who lives with custodial parent in Connecticut is not a resident for school enrollment purposes of Rhode Island school district where the non-custodial parent resides:

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/003-15\\_Residency\\_of\\_S.\\_Doe\\_-41315.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/003-15_Residency_of_S._Doe_-41315.pdf)

**on attorneys' fees- (sent out to list)**

Attorneys' fees under regulations relating to the education of children with disabilities cannot be awarded in the context of a Commissioner's hearing.

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/004-](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/004-15_P.S._aka_Student_by_and_through%20JOANNA_S._v_S._Kingstown_%20S_D_%20041515.pdf)

[15\\_P.S.\\_aka\\_Student\\_by\\_and\\_through%20JOANNA\\_S.\\_v\\_S.\\_Kingstown\\_%20S\\_D\\_%20041515.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/004-15_P.S._aka_Student_by_and_through%20JOANNA_S._v_S._Kingstown_%20S_D_%20041515.pdf)

**3. U.S. Education, Labor Departments seek comment on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - (sent out to list)**

The Departments of Education and Labor are seeking comment on five Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs), proposing rules that would implement the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA). The act, signed by President Obama on July 22, 2014, is the first major reform to federal job training programs in more than 15 years. It's designed to streamline and improve the coordination of employment and training services across federal agencies and strengthen collaboration with state and local partners to increase access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services for individuals to succeed in the labor market.

The proposed regulations are designed to: update and improve federal workforce programs that serve workers, job seekers, and employers; strengthen accountability and transparency; increase access to work-based learning tools, such as [apprenticeships](#); improve relationships with employers, including through sector partnerships, and foster more cohesive planning within economic regions. The proposed rules would also improve access to education and workforce services for individuals with significant barriers to employment—veterans, individuals with disabilities, disconnected youth, and other vulnerable populations—to help them find good work.

The proposed regulations align closely with principles outlined in [Vice President Joseph R. Biden's Ready to Work report](#) on developing a more evidence-based, job-driven workforce system. The vice president's report included a call for greater coordination and more strategic use of federal resources to yield better results, transparent and relevant information so job-seekers and the public know what works, and putting business front and center so our investments are directly responsive to hiring needs.

WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, reauthorizes the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and amends the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The five NPRMs announced yesterday include: a joint rule, issued by the Departments of Labor and Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services, proposing to implement jointly administered activities related to unified planning, performance accountability, and the one-stop system; a Department of Labor rule proposing to implement DOL-specific activities under Title I; and three Department of Education rules proposing to implement the requirements of Titles II and IV.

Please visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) to share your comments on the specific proposed rules, in accordance with the process outlined in the NPRMs. Any comments not received through the processes outlined in the NPRMs will not be considered by the departments.

**4. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights releases Title IX guidance (sent out to list)**

The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) today released a [guidance package](#) emphasizing the responsibility of school districts, colleges, and universities to designate a Title IX coordinator. The package also contains an overview of the law's requirements in several key areas, including athletics, single-sex education, sex-based harassment, and discipline.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

The guidance package released today includes three documents:

- a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) to school districts, colleges, and universities reminding them of their obligation to designate a Title IX coordinator;
- a [letter](#) to Title IX coordinators that provides them more information about their important role; and
- a [Title IX resource guide](#) that includes an overview of Title IX requirements in several key areas, including recruitment, admissions and counseling; financial assistance; athletics; sex-based harassment; treatment of pregnant and parenting students; and discipline—all topics that frequently confront schools and their Title IX coordinators.

Since the issuance of Title IX regulations in 1975, school districts, colleges, and universities receiving federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education have been required to designate at least one employee to coordinate the recipient's compliance with Title IX. More information about Title IX and other OCR guidance documents on Title IX issues [can be found here](#).

##### **5. Board approves dual-enrollment regulations requiring local policies by June 30; webinars scheduled (*Sent out to list*)**

On Monday, the Board of Education unanimously approved a new set of regulations on dual enrollment, which will provide all qualified high-school students in Rhode Island public schools with access to college-level coursework while they are still in high school.

One of RIDE's top priorities has been making sure that our high schools offer challenging coursework, and through dual-enrollment programs, our high-school students from all communities will now have access to credit-bearing, college-level courses. Students who earn college credits while they are still in high school are more likely to enter college, persist in college, and earn a degree – and they are also likely to carry less debt when they graduate.

The regulations that the Board approved enable students to enroll in courses in public postsecondary institutions and to simultaneously earn both college credit and course credit toward earning their high-school diploma. The regulations open the entire course catalogs for dual enrollment, including career and technical education and college-development courses, from the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island.

The regulations also encompass “concurrent enrollment,” which are college-credit courses that students take at their high schools and which are taught by a teacher whom one of the postsecondary institutions has approved. Currently, Rhode Island high schools offer about 60 college-level courses through concurrent enrollment. The regulations state that high schools may establish enrollment criteria for student participation in dual enrollment, and postsecondary institutions may establish eligibility criteria for course enrollment. The regulations require school committees to adopt policies on dual enrollment and to provide families information about dual-enrollment opportunities.

To support districts in meeting the requirements of these regulations, RIDE has posted information on dual enrollment for students and families, for schools, and for districts on the website, at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/dualenrollment>.

Parent information letters on dual enrollment are posted here:

[http://media.ride.ri.gov/BOE/Boe\\_Meeting\\_042715/Encl6a\\_Regulations\\_for\\_Dual\\_Enrollment.pdf](http://media.ride.ri.gov/BOE/Boe_Meeting_042715/Encl6a_Regulations_for_Dual_Enrollment.pdf).

## **8. RIDE seeking public comment on proposed revisions to accountability, classification, support system (sent out to list)**

Over the past year, members of the RIDE team have worked closely with the members of a working group that was convened to discuss the Rhode Island system of school classifications, accountability, and support for low-achieving schools. Based on the ideas of this working group, Accountability 3.0, developed, and taking into account feedback RIDE has received from other educators in the field, parent groups, and groups representing students with disabilities (RISEAC) and English learners, RIDE has developed a set of proposed revisions to our system for school accountability and support. Last month, RIDE submitted the proposed revisions to the U.S. Department of Education, as part of the request for continued flexibility under the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Some of the key elements in our flexibility request include these components of our system of classifications:

*Proficiency:* Instead of receiving points or credit for percentages of students attaining proficiency and percentages of students attaining distinction, schools would receive various amounts of credit for the percentage of students at each level of achievement, with additional credit for improving achievement levels of students facing additional learning challenges (students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students).

*Closing Achievement Gaps:* Schools would receive credit for closing the achievement gap between the lowest-achieving quartile in the school and the top 50 percent of student achievement in the school (or, if the school achievement as a whole is especially low, the top 50 percent of achievement in Rhode Island). This requested change would help alleviate the problem of many schools still not being held accountable for gap-closing for various students groups because of low “n-sizes.” It would also respond to concerns educators and others have raised regarding “blaming” various student groups for low school achievement – rather than focusing on the achievement and growth of all students. Additionally, it would respond to concerns about schools that may have “closed” achievement gaps only because of an overall decline in student performance in the reference group.

*Growth:* Rather than maintain our focus on the median growth of all students and of various identified student groups, our request would allow us to focus on the growth of students a growth percentile lower than 35 (i.e., 66 percent of students or more have made greater growth over the past academic year). Students below the 35<sup>th</sup> growth percentile are those most likely to lose academic ground over time.

Along with these proposed changes, it is important to note that RIDE will continue to use graduation rates and participation rates as key components in the system of accountability and, most important, will continue to calculate and publicly report annual targets and progress toward those targets for all student groups. Schools that fail to meet their participation-rate targets of 95 percent cannot be classified as Commended Schools. Schools that fail to meet any annual target for three consecutive years – including the participation-rate target – will receive an “alert” as part of their classification and will be ineligible for either of our highest classifications, Commended and Leading.

The changes would go into effect for the school classifications beginning with the 2015-16 school year, and our request for flexibility covers a span of three school years.

RIDE has posted to the website a PowerPoint on these proposed revisions to our accountability system:

<http://ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/Accountability.aspx> (see under “New: RI Accountability Revisions”) Comments and feedback are welcome; please use this email address: [ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov](mailto:ESEA.flex@ride.ri.gov).

## **9. Report on digital-learning policies ranks R.I. 20<sup>th</sup> in the country, 2<sup>nd</sup> in New England**

A new report from the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the Digital Learning Now 2014 Report Card, ranks Rhode Island 20<sup>th</sup> in the country (with a grade of C and score of 74) on our digital-learning policies. Rhode Island ranks second among the New England states, with a score one point below that of Maine.

The full report is posted here: <http://digitallearningnow.com/report-card/>

#### **10. Other Health Impaired module regarding eligibility for special education services available on RIDE website (sent out to list)**

RIDE is pleased to announce a new on-line module available to provide assistance to special education evaluation teams regarding student eligibility in the category of Other Health Impaired. This module is available on the RIDE website under Special Education Regulations (Be Informed) and Special Education Resources (Other Health Impaired), or at this link:

[http://media.ride.ri.gov/OSCAS/OHI\\_Module-FINAL\\_4-10-2015/story.html](http://media.ride.ri.gov/OSCAS/OHI_Module-FINAL_4-10-2015/story.html).

Please share this valuable information with parents. If you have questions about this module, please contact Alice Woods, at 222-8983 or [Alice.Woods@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Alice.Woods@ride.ri.gov).

#### **11. RIDE develops on-line training module on IDEA portion of CRP**

RIDE has developed a new on-line training module to assist LEAs in completing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and Preschool portion of the Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP). This module will be helpful to special education directors experienced in completing the CRP application as well as to new special education directors. The module provides an overview of all areas of the IDEA applications, and it also allows a person to target a particular topic where there is a question or need for review. The module provides information on how to complete each page of the CRP: Maintenance of Effort, Private School, EIS, and Budget items. In addition, there is some information on how to navigate the Acelegrant system, use the Document Library, and find assistance when help is needed. To access this module, click here: [www.ride.ri.gov/IDEA-CRP-Training-Module](http://www.ride.ri.gov/IDEA-CRP-Training-Module) or, from the RIDE website, under the Funding and Finance banner, click on Federal Funds and Acelegrants and you will see "IDEA CRP Training Module."

#### **12. Assistive Technology School Share Launched**

TechACCESS and OSCAS are happy to announce the opening of AT School Share. Many schools have purchased Assistive Technology (AT) devices for students who have graduated or moved out of district. Many of the AT devices, special keyboards or mice, software, laptops, communication devices, wheelchairs and more are in a closet, on a shelf, in a desk drawer – not being used. What if another student in your district or across the state could benefit from that AT device? Help recycle and reuse unused AT devices with the AT School Share! This is a "members only" online sharing tool for Rhode Island school systems.

The AT School Share allows participating entities to track their inventory of Assistive Technology devices. It is also designed to encourage the recycling of devices that are no longer in use and that have been marked as available for "sharing" (e.g. short or long term loan, sale or donation) to others. Anyone can search the listings of devices that are on the AT School Share web site but only approved, logged in users can contact listers and track their own inventory. Get started today for FREE. Visit: <http://ri.hybrid.atschoolshare.org/>, to get started. Several RI school districts have been contacted about entering their inventory into AT School Share and TechACCESS will be assisting districts with the process starting this summer. Please feel free to contact Kelly Charlebois, Executive Director of TechACCESS of RI for more information at [kellyc@techaccess-ri.org](mailto:kellyc@techaccess-ri.org) or (401) 463-0202.

#### **13. US Department of Justice Consent Decree Update-(Sent out on list)**

**Teachers of Life Skills Network-** At the TLS Network Meeting Spring Check & Connect "Tips for completing the Career Development Plan" was disseminated, in addition to a number of other documents and resources associated with the Consent Decree that we have shared throughout the year. All of these documents and resources can be found on [www.ritap.org](http://www.ritap.org) under the TLS Network. Lastly, if you are in need of any additional technical assistance regarding the implementation of Person Centered Planning or Career Development Plans please contact your Regional Transition Coordinator or Jane Slade [jane.slade@ride.ri.gov](mailto:jane.slade@ride.ri.gov).

#### **14. Recent Letters and Guidance from OSEP- (Sent out to list)**

The first letter deals with Dispute Resolution and a practice by some public agencies of filing a due process complaint ostensibly delaying the state complaint process. In this letter, OSEP clarifies its expectations for the handling of state complaints and clearly cautions the utilization of due process complaints to essentially delay the state complaint process. The second letter is generally a reminder of the 2013 letter from OSEP regarding the eligibility of students with high cognition, frequently referred to as twice exceptional or "2E" students. I have attached the current memo and the original December 20, 2013 letter to Dr. Jim Delisle for your reference.

#### **15. RI Statewide Independent Living Council to Sponsor an Open House**

RI Statewide Independent Living Council  
Open House June 10, 2015  
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Warwick Public Library  
600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI

How can we improve the Independent Living Services for People with Disabilities in Rhode Island? Such as: Transportation, Home Modifications, Employment, Health Care, Personal Care Attendant, Assistive Technology, Youth Transition, Information and Referral, Community Accessibility.....

Come share your thoughts! Light refreshments. ASL interpreters / CART confirmed.

Questions Contact: [LRockwood@risilc.org](mailto:LRockwood@risilc.org) or 401.337.5888

[www.risilc.org](http://www.risilc.org)

#### **16. Rhode Island's IDEA Part B Application –**

Each year the Rhode Island Department of Education applies for a grant award under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A draft of the proposed application and accompanying use of funds spreadsheet were posted for a 60 day public review period and 30 day public comment period. The Rhode Island application and spreadsheet were available for public review and comment March 2, 2015 through May 4, 2015 at 4:00 PM. The public review and public comment periods have concluded and Rhode Island Department of Education has submitted for approval the FFY2015 application for the grant award under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

#### **New Business:**

- **Membership Committee Report** – Deb Garneau informed the group that the membership committee has received two applications for parents interested in joining RISEAC and Sue Donovan indicated that representatives from higher education are also being considered; after interviews take place these members will be voted upon for acceptance to RIASEAC.
- **Vote: New Members and Slate of Officers - (Executive session opened)** Current opening on the board for a corresponding secretary – nomination of Jennifer Gladding to fill this role was voted on and unanimously accepted; Jennifer Gladding will now be the corresponding secretary for RISEAC. **(Executive session closed)**

**Work Group Action Plan Review:** The workgroups met to review and finalize work plans.

**Advisory Time:** Brian Quigg suggested an agenda item for next year related to diploma options for students; discussion took place with several members stating that there is a need for diploma options that recognize the value of students skills to the community at large; Sue Donovan requested that Brian come to the strategic planning day in September with some information about what other states are doing in this regard and also what criteria might be for diploma options. Brian agreed to follow up and revisit at the September planning day.

Jen Connelly asked for a summary of the RICART event and Trish Martins and other provided the highlights and noted that the event has been taped and will be available for viewing.

**Public Comment: None**

**Motion to adjourn** made by Jennifer Gladding; seconded by Trish Martins. All approved.

**Meeting was adjourned: 8: 07 pm**