MINUTES OF THE MEETING
MARCH 11, 2013

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The first meeting of the Rhode Island Board of Education was held on Monday, March 11th, 2013, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Board Room 4090, 400 East Avenue, Warwick, 02886. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.


Absent: None

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was VOTED:

That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of March 11, 2013.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

2. OPEN FORUM

Joe Allen, Ph.D., a professor of Mathematics at the Community College of Rhode Island, addressed high-stakes testing and the structure of higher education in Rhode Island (Appendix A).

Connie L. McGreavy, director of Energy Grant programs at the Community College of Rhode Island, addressed STEM education in Rhode Island (Appendix B).

3. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

a. Overview of the PK-20 Education Board

Chair Mancuso thanked former Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education chair and Board of Governors for Higher Education member George Caruolo for his initial work on merging both boards into the Rhode Island Board of Education. Upon her appointment in December, Chair Mancuso embarked on a “listening tour” that included legislators, administrators, and education and higher education leaders and staff.
The chairwoman also noted that two Executive Committee meetings have been held so far as well. This committee, consisting of the commissioners of higher education and education as well as the presidents of the public higher education institutions and attended by Chair Mancuso at the commissioners’ invitation, will continue to meet monthly to develop each agenda for Board of Education meetings and work sessions. Chair Mancuso lauded the members of the Executive Committee and noted that she had been in attendance in Boston on March 8th when President Di Pasquale received the Eleanor M. McMahon Award for Lifetime Achievement from the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE).

The Board of Education plans to continue the work and policy making of the prior boards such as graduation requirements, education preparation, collective bargaining, and tenure, as one fiscally responsible board charged with educating Rhode Islanders at all stages, from pre-kindergarten through professional degrees. The Board of Education will be open, transparent, and inclusive and will invite recommendations from the public.

Chair Mancuso then introduced Governor Lincoln Chafee, who thanked the newly-appointed members of the Board of Education as well as the school committees and the unions that cover both urban and suburban education areas. Governor Chafee noted that education has been a priority for his administration, with the current budget reflecting $30.3 million for K-12 education, $14 million for repairs at career and technical schools, and $6 million restored to public higher education. Governor Chafee said he will continue to commit to funding education and higher education as long as he is Governor.

Governor Chafee also dismissed earlier concerns of higher education being overlooked in a combined K-20 board, noting that community colleges serve as a bridge between high school and college and that the future of Rhode Island depends on all levels of education to prepare our workforce.

Finally, the Governor noted that a future wave of retirements in Rhode Island will become a great opportunity for skilled workers to take over these positions. With a need arising, we need better job preparation for RI youngsters. The Governor will commit the money and expects the Board of Education to commit the rest.

Chair Mancuso noted the Board’s appreciation of the Governor’s commitment to education and higher education.

Chair Mancuso also noted that the Board will have two committees: a Personnel Committee, which will be chaired by William Maaia, and an Appeals Committee, which will be chaired by Karin Forbes.

b. Notification of the Formation of a Tuition Waiver Commission

In January, Chair Mancuso received a letter from Governor Chafee noting his concern with the administration of the tuition waiver programs at Rhode Island’s public higher education institutions and requesting that the tuition waiver program be among the Board of Education’s priorities. Attorneys Sandra Lanni and Ron Cavallaro have been directed by Chair Mancuso to head an investigation of the issues and report to the Board of Education.

4 REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

a. Report of the Commissioner of Education
Prior to presenting her report, Commissioner Deborah Gist clarified the acronym STEM mentioned by an Open Forum speaker, informing the Board that it stood for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Commissioner Gist noted two upcoming hearings for the education budget: March 14th by the Senate Finance Committee and March 26th by the House Finance Committee and that the full funding formula is included in categorical funds such as technical education and special education.

The Career & Technical category includes new regulations approved last year, providing students access to any approved program in the state rather than just the one closest to the student’s residence.

The Public Schoolhouse assessment will be held in three weeks and will generate a facilities report on maintenance, repair and construction and also check if the school is in use.

Commissioner Gist was pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Education is planning a four-day visit to Rhode Island for Race to the Top. Secretary Arne Duncan called Rhode Island one of three states making excellent progress, and Rhode Island is a model for performance management.

Since the NECAP release, Commissioner Gist and her staff have been in touch with educators, families and students and have rallied a commitment for this graduation requirement. Before the NECAP release, 300 students had signed up; after the release, that number skyrocketed to 2600 students.

Commissioner Gist also noted that RIDE made a commitment through Race to the Top and the Early Learning Council regarding the Early Learning Development Standards that the Board will hear about tonight. On April 4th, RIDE will present the program standards, and on April 8th, permission will be sought from the Board to send them out for public comment.

b. Report of the Commissioner of Higher Education

Commissioner Ray Di Pasquale stated that he looks forward to working with the Board of Education to provide a quality education for all students in Rhode Island.

The higher education budget will also be heard before the Senate and House Finance Committees, and the commissioner asked for the Board’s support. Commissioner Di Pasquale thanked Governor Chafee for his effort in restoring funds to the public higher education system. The system and the Board look at graduation rates, retention rates, affordability, and accessibility, but we also need to retain quality, and quality needs funding. The commissioner noted that this year is critical because the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island will all freeze tuition. The system needs to keep the budget intact.

Commissioner Di Pasquale noted that the public higher education system represents over 43,000 students. Some of the items the Board will work with tonight and in the coming meetings is refinancing grants for cost savings, approving the mid-year budget, reviewing new academic programs for approval, providing guidance on a joint URI/RIC nursing facility, and negotiating and approving contracts with 14 collective bargaining units.

Commissioner Di Pasquale looks forward to working with the Board and working with RIDE on tracking longitudinal studies of Rhode Islanders from kindergarten through college. We will work together and help create educational success.
Chair Mancuso thanked the commissioners and also thanked President Di Pasquale for hosting tonight’s meeting. She noted that beginning in September, the Board of Education will start meeting at different PK-12 districts around the state.

5. **APPROVAL ITEMS**

**Item 5a – Approval of Bylaws of the Rhode Island Board of Education**

Chair Mancuso thanked David Abbott from RIDE and Ron Cavallaro from the Office of Higher Education for their work on creating the bylaws for the Board of Education and noted that Attorneys Abbott and Cavallaro are now working on a corresponding cross-section of statutory issues.

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED:  

That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves and adopts the attached document to serve as its Bylaws.

Vote:  

11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS:  0

**Item 5b – Election of the Board’s Secretary**

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Karin Forbes, and seconded by Mathies Santos, it was

VOTED:  

That the Rhode Island Board of Education elects Colleen Callahan as Secretary.

Vote:  

11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS:  0

**Item 5c – Revisions to the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program Regulations**
Commissioner Gist noted that conversations were published last fall for the proposed GED changes. Revisions included moving from a paper version to a computer-based requirement by January 2014 and adjusting the GED age requirement, which currently restricts students under the age of 18. In response to an inquiry on how fees are handled if a student must retake the GEDs, Commissioner Gist stated that there are different fees for initial takes and retakes, and RIDE will continue exploring fees so as not to burden students. Tonight’s request is for regulations that need to be changed now, but additional changes to the GED regulations will be brought before the Board in the future.

In response to a query on how people will be made aware of the changes, it was stated that RIDE is in close contact with GED centers and training program to ensure that students who have finished four tests already know they need to finish the fifth. The Adult Education Advisory Committee is also communicating effectively, and CCRI was recognized as that committee’s biggest partner. Finally, in response to how the improved learning plan would affect the dropout rate, it was stated that compulsory attendance went into effect last year. If a student was under an IEP, the system is responsible for monitoring the student’s programs but not necessarily for ensuring a high school graduation. In Rhode Island, the GED is an alternative meaningful credential to that diploma.

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Karin Forbes and Michael Grande, and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the Regulations of the Board of Education Governing the High School Equivalency Program Regulations. These changes shall go into effect immediately upon passage.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

Item 5d – Approval of Theatre, Latin, School Counselor, Superintendent Tests and Adoption of Early Implementation of Temporary Initial Certificate

Commissioner Gist noted that these regulations were adopted in November 2012 to go into effect in January 2013. Changes by the Educational Testing Services (ETS) will result in occasional changes to local policies. This adjustment reflects the scale change.

These recommendations were reviewed by RIDE staff and were shared with the Certification Policy Board (CPAB), with the School Counselors Association, and with those superintendents who participated in the validation studies. All have indicated their support.

As for the temporary initial certificate, the Board of Regents originally adopted these regulations in order to help qualified candidates from other states obtain a temporary initial certificate, but the changes adopted by the Regents are not slated to take effect until a later date. Today’s approval by the Board of Education would move up that date.

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Colleen Callahan and Mathies Santos, and seconded by Karin Forbes and Michael Grande, it was
VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the following recommended Educational Testing Service certification tests: Latin (0601) and passing score (161); Theatre (0641) and passing score 159; Professional School Counselor (0421/5421) and passing score 156; School Superintendent Assessment (6021) and passing score 160 as a requirement for initial licensure in Rhode Island; and

That the Rhode Island Board of Education adopts the amended certification regulations establishing April 2, 2013 as the effective date for the Temporary Initial certificate.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

Item 5e – Approval of Nominations for the Boards of Trustees of the Metropolitan Regional Career and Tech Center, Rhode Island School for the Deaf, and the Central Falls School District

Last fall, a state-wide campaign sought volunteers for the several boards of trustees. Sixty candidates responded, and resumes were collected and reviewed for leadership, service to community, and commitment to education, narrowing down to those candidates who could bring unique qualities to each board.

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Antonio Barajas and Mathies Santos and seconded by Karin Forbes and Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the appointments as presented.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

Those nominees present were recognized for their willingness to serve as trustees.

Item 5f – Appeals Committee Recommendation

Appeals Committee Chair Karin Forbes reported on an appeal in the matter of East Providence School Department vs. Student E. Doe in which the East Providence School
Department must pay Student E. Doe’s 2011-2012 enrollment at the Jacqueline M. Walsh School for Performing and Visual Arts in Pawtucket. The case was remanded for more study, with the argument that a burden was being placed on the community. The commissioner reviewed the case, and the Appeals Committee now affirms the commissioner’s decision.

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Antonio Barajas, it was

VOTED: That, in the matter of Ed. Doe v. East Providence School Department, the Decision of the Commissioner on Remand is affirmed as presented.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

Item 5g – Revocation of Permission for The Sawyer Schools to Operate in Rhode Island

Commissioner Di Pasquale reported that The Sawyer Schools have operated in Rhode Island since 1969 without any sign of trouble. Their sudden closure was a surprise to students, staff and the Office of Higher Education, and the commissioner thanked Associate Commissioner Deborah Grossman-Garber, Associate Commissioner Susan LaPanne, and General Counsel Ron Cavallaro for all of their efforts in the aftermath, including obtaining and securing all transcripts from the shut-down facility and counseling and advising Sawyer’s 300 displaced students by holding a transfer fair and diverting staff to handling calls and inquiries.

On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Antonio Barajas and Colleen Callahan and seconded by Mathies Santos, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education revokes approval for The Sawyer Schools to operate in Rhode Island.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

Item 5h – Awarding of Tenure by the Community College of Rhode Island

President Di Pasquale was pleased to recommend these candidates, all of whom had been reviewed by their department chairs, their school/college deans, and the vice president of academic affairs.
On a motion entertained by Chair Mancuso, moved by Antonio Barajas and Colleen Callahan and seconded by Mathies Santos, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the awarding of tenure to the individuals presented and set forth in the enclosure to this item.

**Vote:** 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

**NAYS:** 0

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6. **FUTURE ACTION ITEMS**

**Item 6a – Rhode Island Charter Schools**

Commissioner Gist noted that the charter schools in question have had their applications renewed and have completed the process to open in the fall. The names and information on each charter school will be available at the work session prior to requesting a formal Board vote.

**Item 6b – State-wide Approved Budget Model**

Commissioner Gist noted that the General Assembly school district compliance statute was amended and is unique to Rhode Island. The charter school accounts are a standard budgeting process, providing insight on how to invest money and being a great resource for them. Organizations such as the Association of School Business Officials have studied this budget model, and the Board will receive an outline of standard budget elements.

**Item 6c – Cranston Area Career and Technical Center Transfer Agreement**

Commissioner Gist explained that there are ten regulated career and technical centers in Rhode Island. The state is transferring those regulations to local districts, and this recommendation is for Board approval of $3.2 million for final health and safety regulations at Cranston Area Career and Technical. The district would take ownership of the buildings in this transfer agreement.

**Item 6d – Refinancing of Several RIHEBC Revenue Bonds at URI to Achieve Savings**

President Dooley explained that on a regular basis, bonds at the University of Rhode Island require board approval. The University periodically reviews items, and whenever there is a favorable national financing opportunity, URI refines/refunds the bonds. In this case, URI could save $6 million over the 12-20 year remaining terms of the RIHEBC bonds.

**Item 6e – FY '13 Mid-Year Budget, Tuition Fees, and Tables of Organization for URI, RIC, CCRI, and the Office of Higher Education**
Associate Commissioner for Finance and Management Susan LaPanne informed the Board of a mid-year process to review activities based on actual, rather than projected, enrollment figures. The mid-year budget will be presented for approval at the next Board meeting.

Item 6f – New 3-2 M.S. in Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island

Provost Donald DeHayes explained that URI has had an M.S. in Oceanography for years. This conversion to a “3-2” program would allow students to enter the bachelor portion of the program while enrolled as undergraduates as a hybrid degree process, saving them both time and cost toward earning their final master’s degree in Oceanography. URI is not proposing any changes to the program’s current curriculum, but rather is providing an alternative pathway for Rhode Island students to earn their desired degree in a shorter amount of time.

Item 6g – Adoption of Revised Resolution Regarding URI’s Facility Clearance and Temporary Exclusion to Classified Information

President Dooley noted that URI has access to classified information tied to some contracts they hold. The resolution and temporary exclusion are bureaucratic items needed to continue that work but keep board members at the distance they desire.

7. PRESIDENTS’ REPORTS

a. University of Rhode Island

President Dooley noted that 80% of the University’s current budget is coming from tuition. URI is marketing via letters and communications to all students that tuition will not increase this year. However, the University will need the support of the Board, of the General Assembly, and of Governor Chafee in order to maintain quality while keeping tuition frozen this coming year.

URI is keeping an eye on local consequences from the federal government’s sequestration, particularly the anticipation of decreased federal funds for research.

The University is aggressively working to expand global initiatives, including by participating in international student exchange programs.

President Dooley informed the Board that an Administrative Management and Review Committee is in place at URI to review administrative structures and operations in order to be efficient and effective in academic and research programs. The committee’s highest priority is to educate students and foster new work, and the committee is tasked with exploring how to devote more resources to those academic and research priorities over business and administrative functions.

b. Rhode Island College

President Carriuolo reported that about 80 people from Rhode Island College and the Central Falls School District collaborated in a planning meeting to develop strategies for a developing partnership. The president is pleased at the partnerships, particularly with the close collaboration with Superintendent Fran Gallo. The next meetings will be held on Saturday, March 16th from 12-4 p.m. and Wednesday, April 3rd from 4:30-6:30 p.m. President Carriuolo was also pleased to highlight a partnership between RIC students and the Paul Cuffee School for summer math support.

President Carriuolo shared that she was named a trustee of the New England
Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in December 2012. She was also pleased to note that the Art Center is nearing its Phase One completion date, which is anticipated for sometime in May, and that RIC is developing partnerships with two colleges in Israel.

In other news, the president reported that RIC will host a shooting seminar for the Rhode Island State Police School on March 12th from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. and that the RIC men’s basketball team won the Little East Conference Tournament, earning its fifth tournament title in the past seven seasons.

c. Community College of Rhode Island

President Di Pasquale updated the Board on CCRI’s Spring 2013 enrollment, which is 16,818 students. CCRI is seeing its highest minority enrollment ever, at 33 percent, and distance learning courses have also increased notably.

CCRI is finalizing its strategic plan. The college is due for its NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation next year and is working on a self-assessment that should be ready to share by the end of this academic year. He thanked Commissioner Gist for her collaboration.

CCRI will celebrate its sixth annual All College Week from April 8-12, with various events including the volunteerism of 150 students, staff and faculty at eight non-profit organizations around the state.

Lastly, the Board of Education will be asked to approve two vice president positions this year – that of Academic Affairs and that of Business Affairs – for CCRI. The Board will hear more details in the coming months as those searches progress.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Mancuso entertained a motion to enter into executive session to discuss an update on pending litigation/ULP Complaint (and accompanying litigation) – AAUP pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2), noting that any action related to items discussed in executive session would be taken when the Board of Education reconvened in Open Session.

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and Karin Forbes and seconded by Karin Forbes and Antonio Barajas, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education convenes in Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2) for the reasons set forth above.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

After a short break, the Board convened in Executive Session at 7:04 p.m.
All non-Board members in the audience were excused with the exception of Ray Di Pasquale, Commissioner of Higher Education/President of CCRI; Deborah Gist, Commissioner of Education; Ronald Cavallaro, General Counsel for the Board; Anne Marie Coleman, Director of Labor Relations; David Dooley, President of URI; and Nancy Carriuolo, President of RIC.

At the conclusion of the discussions, Chair Mancuso asked for a motion to reconvene in Open Session. On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education reconvenes in open session.

**Vote:** 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

The Board reconvened in open session at 7:19 p.m.

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education seals the minutes of the Executive Session discussion on March 11, 2013.

**Vote:** 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Michael A. Grande, Patrick A. Guida, William C. Maaia, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos.

**NAYS:** 0

13. **NEXT MEETINGS**

Thursday, April 4th, 9:00 a.m. (work session) at the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Shepard Building, Room 501, Providence, Rhode Island.

Monday, April 8th, 5:30 p.m. (meeting) at Rhode Island College, Student Ballroom, Providence, Rhode Island.

Wednesday, May 8th, 4 p.m. (work session) at the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Shepard Building, Room 501, Providence, Rhode Island.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion duly made by Antonio Barajas and seconded by William Maaia, it was
VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:


NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.