



Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

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

Enclosure 7c
January 12, 2015

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: **Approval of Nominees to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees**

It is with great pleasure that I recommend, **Amanda Montgomery**, as the new Chair of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees.

I further recommend, **Nora Meah**, as a nominee to fill a current vacancy on the Board of Trustees.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of Amanda Montgomery, as the new Chair of the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees, and Nora Meah, as a new member of the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees, as presented.

Candidates for Boards of Trustees at State-Operated Schools

Amanda Montgomery

1. Background:

What led you to be interested in serving on the Board of Trustees?

I spent the first ten years of my education at The Learning Center for the Deaf in Framingham, Massachusetts, -- and then went on to the EDCO program at Newton North High School (a mainstream program with approximately 40 Deaf students). I strongly believe I would not be the person I am today if I didn't have such early exposure to American Sign Language, strong role models, other children like myself, and supportive teachers and faculty. It would be an honor to support another school providing children with a similar experience. Additionally, I believe this school is something Rhode Island should be proud to have, and as a resident of this state, I want to help spread awareness about the opportunities for Deaf children here.

2. Qualifications

What qualities and strengths from your background and experience will you bring to the Board if you are chosen to serve?

I would bring my personal knowledge of how beneficial it is for a school to have a variety of programs for its students; and to have a strong connection to its local Deaf community. As an attorney, I bring analytical and strategic thinking skills that maybe useful for both short and long-term planning. Additionally, I think it is important that Deaf schools have accomplished Deaf adults on their Boards to inspire parents and students as to what is possible when a Deaf child has the resources to they need to reach their potential.

3. Goals:

Is there any particular area or initiative that you would like to focus on as a new member of the Board of Trustees?

I would like to focus on making the Providence and Rhode Island Community more aware of the school and what benefits it offers; to both Deaf children and to Deaf individuals as a whole. As an example, I would like to encourage media coverage of sport events, tournaments, and similar occasions. When a parent discovers that their child is newly Deaf, I want them to have already heard of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, and in a positive way.

Amanda Montgomery is a law clerk at Motley Rice, LLC in Providence, RI. She is a licensed attorney in Massachusetts. She earned her Juris Doctorate from Roger Williams University School of Law in Bristol, RI in 2012. While at the Law School, Amanda was awarded the A.G. Bell 2011 George H. Nofer Scholarship for Law and Public Policy; as well as a Public Interest Scholarship. While still a Student Attorney, Amanda focused her training around advocating for underserved populations through both an internship as a Student Attorney in Massachusetts at Metro West Legal Services; and as a Student Attorney at the Roger Williams Law School Criminal Defense Clinic. Amanda also has a Masters degree in Labor Studies from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst.

In her earlier years, Amanda went to The Learning Center for the Deaf from pre-school to middle school, at which point she went to Day Middle School in Newton to participate in the EDCO Collaborative which saw her through her high school years at Newton North High School. She then earned her undergraduate degree at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Amanda Montgomery

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BAR STATUS: Licensed to practice in Massachusetts.

EDUCATION:

Roger Williams University School of Law, Bristol, RI

Juris Doctor awarded May 2012

Honors: Public Interest Scholarship for all three years (one of 5 awarded)

Dean's Merit Scholarship all three years

A.G. Bell 2011 George H. Nofer Scholarship for Law and Public Policy

CALI Award for Excellence, Anti Trust 2011

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

Master of Science in Labor Studies awarded May 2007

Honors: Graduated *summa cum laude*

Co-Chair of the Student Body Caucus

Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY

Bachelor of Science in Professional and Technical Communication awarded November 2004

LEGAL EXPERIENCE:

Motley Rice LLC, Providence, RI

Law Clerk, February 2014- Present

Responsible for preparing client files for settlement; preparing Plaintiff Fact Sheets to satisfy Pre Trial Orders in a mass litigation product liability case; preparation involves communicating with clients, and reviewing medical records. Additional responsibilities include organizing expert witness materials in preparation for trial.

Law Office of Aaron A. Greenlee, Providence, RI

Legal Assistant, April 2013 – November 2013

Conducted legal research and writing assistance on an as needed basis for family law and criminal defense attorney Aaron A. Greenlee. Specific assignments include drafting and editing complaints for cases involving The Americans with Disabilities Act; Breed Specific Legislation; and provided research and writing assistance on cases involving relocation and child custody.

Criminal Defense Clinic, RWU School of Law, Providence, RI

Student Attorney under Rule 9, January – May 2012

Represented low-income clients, most of whom had mental disabilities, charged with misdemeanors in Providence District Court as well as represented clients at the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal. Responsibilities included: legal research; client and witness interviews; trial preparation, and in-court representation.

Law Office of John R. Grasso, Inc., Providence, RI

Legal Intern, February - October 2011

Responsible for preparing for criminal defense trial; drafted a mitigation report that was used to successfully mitigate the charges against a veteran struggling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Additional responsibilities included coordinating psychological support services for the client; maintaining on-going client contact to help him manage his treatment plan; as well as reviewing medical files.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE (continued)

MetroWest Legal Services, Framingham, MA

Student Attorney in the Housing Law Department, June – August 2011

As a student attorney under Massachusetts Rule 3:03, helped provide free civil legal aid to people with disabilities, and/or low incomes, primarily those with housing subsidies or living in public housing. Responsibilities included client intakes; drafting memos and court motions, as well as court approved agreements. Assisted in preparation for an administrative hearing which successfully kept a young woman with a mental disability and her mother in their home. **LEGAL EXPERIENCE (continued):**

Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, Boston, MA

Legal intern, June – August 2010

Responsibilities included drafting published decisions regarding unit certification petitions and unfair labor practice charges; participated in investigative hearings and drafted complaints arising from the investigative hearings regarding violations of Massachusetts labor law; participated as an observant in mediation sessions prior to investigative hearings.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Malden, MA

Communications & Research Coordinator September 2007 – June 2009

Composed press releases; wrote and edited the *Weekly Labor Reader*, an online newsletter with a readership of 2,000+; managed website content; composed external communications; and, designed and edited a quarterly newsletter on workforce development.

Community Labor United, Boston, MA

Research Assistant June – August 2007

Researched the financial impact to the Boston area of hospitals and universities operating under Payment In Lieu of Taxes.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

Research Assistant February – May 2007

Collaborated with a research team on a state-funded study of low-wage and immigrant workers in Massachusetts.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

Teaching Assistant September 2006 – January 2007

Research Associates of America/FAST, Washington, D.C.

Research Intern June – August 2006

Conducted corporate strategic research as part of a team.

Office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Boston, MA

Legislative Intern June – August 2004

Responsible for responding to the concerns of veterans residing in Massachusetts.

LANGUAGES: Fluent in American Sign Language.

INTERESTS: Film; reading; New England sports; and theater.

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Candidates for Boards of Trustees at State-Operated Schools

Rhode Island School for the Deaf

Nora Meah

1. *Background:*

What led you to be interested in serving on the Board of Trustees?

My interest to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Rhode Island School for the Deaf emerged from a lengthy conversation with the Board's president wherein I learned a great deal about the school's resources and potential. However, my interest to serve on a public school board has long been rooted in my commitment to improving public education. Until recently, I have worked in public and non-profit organizations that have enabled me to realize this commitment. At this time, I feel prepared and well equipped to take on the responsibility of serving on the Board of Trustees.

2. *Qualifications:*

What qualities and strengths from your background and experience will you bring to the Board if you are chosen to serve?

Over the past 16 years, I have worked in public education in a variety of roles that positioned me to collaborate across stakeholder groups. I earned an M.Ed. and an M.A. in Urban Education Policy. I taught secondary English literature in a Philadelphia charter high school and served as an English language teacher and teacher trainer while serving in the United States Peace Corps. I managed the West End/Lower South Side AfterZone for PASA, Inc. before consulting with TNTP, Inc. on a strategic staffing initiative in Providence Public Schools. In my last role, I oversaw the performance management system for the state's charter schools. Across each of these experiences, I have maintained a reflective and iterative practice of professional development. I value quantitative data and the personal narrative; I exercise the skills of an influencer and an independent decision-maker. I believe every child deserves a quality public education and just access to opportunity.

3. *Goals:*

Is there any particular area or initiative that you would like to focus on as a new member of the Board of Trustees?

I would enjoy working on any human capital or performance/talent management initiatives as well as engaging in any mid- or long-term strategic planning.

NORA MEAH

107 Parade Street #2 • Providence, RI 02909 • nora.meah@gmail.com • 203.537.4682

EDUCATION:

Brown University
Providence, RI
M.A. Urban Education Policy
May 2009

Saint Joseph's University
Philadelphia, PA
M.Ed.
May 2002

Saint Joseph's University
Philadelphia, PA
B.A.
May 1999

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE:

Charter School Specialist, Rhode Island Department of Education

Providence, RI

September 2012-Present

- Manages state-wide implementation of the charter school quality assurance system, including the coordination of charter school evaluations.
- Authors the charter school performance reports, manages the school evaluation visits and teams, and recommends continuation or conclusion of charter school programs.

Site Manager, The New Teacher Project, Providence Schools

Providence, RI

February 2010-August 2012

- Consulted the district COO and CAO to identify and optimize opportunities for mutual consent hiring.
- Provided direct talent management services to the district's executive directors who are responsible for supervising the district's 35+ principals.
- Administered the district-wide instructional culture survey, developed and administered an instructional leadership survey for principals, and analyzed district-wide staffing data against goal timelines.
- Designed and delivered workshops on mutual consent hiring practices for school-based hiring teams.

AfterZone Coordinator, Providence AfterSchool Alliance, Inc.

Providence, RI

February 2007 - September 2008

- Managed the operations and front-line staff for the West End-Upper South Side AfterZone, a system of tuition-free after-school programming for middle-school youth.
- Managed AfterZone budget logistics, including programming cost negotiation, staffing and transportation allocations, and 21st Century grant management.
- Coordinated community partnerships and stakeholders to assess programming grant allocation, organize a universal transportation system and develop dynamic community engagement strategies.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, DATA ANALYSIS & POLICY EXPERIENCE:

Consultant, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Malden, MA

October 2009 – January 2010

- Managed the design and development of the District and School Assistance Center data-tracking tool used to monitor eligibility, participation, and funding of the project.

Communications Fellow, Education Pioneers

Quincy, MA

June 2009 – September 2009

- Selected as one of 230 Fellows from over 1,900 applicants from business, law, and policy graduate programs around the country to participate in the education leadership cohort training.
- Analyzed a concept model for funding ventures in education by synthesizing qualitative and quantitative data for the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

Quality Intern, National Center for Education Statistics

Washington, DC

January 2009

- Administered quality checks on the data collection tool for the *Baccalaureate and Beyond* and *Beginning Post-Secondary* studies.

- Provided user feedback on web-based portal to federal education statistics.

Education Policy Advisor Intern, Rhode Island House of Representatives

Providence, RI

September 2008 – May 2009

- Researched, interpreted, and synthesized state statute and regulation to inform elected official's positions on education policy.
- Analyzed the district-level implications of state and federal policy, including the ARRA and RTTT.

English Literature Teacher, Multi-Cultural Academy Charter High School

Philadelphia, PA

August 2005 - August 2006

- Designed and facilitated the senior class seminar and senior class project curricula, timelines and rubrics.
- Served as senior class liaison and assessed completion of graduation requirements.
- Taught 10th grade American literature and 11th grade British literature.

Assistant Coach, Women's Lacrosse Villanova University

Villanova, PA

August 2005 – November 2006

- Recruited prospective student-athletes, designed and managed the recruit database, managed the youth summer camp, and co-led the defense and midfield strategy for the Division I program.

English Language Teacher Trainer, United States Peace Corps

Manhiça, Mozambique, Africa

October 2002 - January 2005

- Taught courses in English language and pedagogy for English language learning to primary school student-teachers at the Instituto Magesterio du Primario (IMAP), a teacher training college.
- Co-developed the course curricula for Year 1 and Year 2 of the two-year teacher training program, including the graduate-level teachers' practicum.
- Partnered with the urban English Language Fellows in the Mozambican capital of Maputo to engage IMAP students in the national calibration for English language learning standards.

Graduate Assistant, Women's Lacrosse St. Joseph's University

Philadelphia, PA

September 1999 - May 2001

- Fulfilled the responsibilities of a full-time assistant coach for the Division I Atlantic-10 program while pursuing a graduate degree in Education.

MEMBERSHIP & PARTICIPATION:

- National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Leaders Program
- Education Pioneers Collaboration Award Recipient
- The Gender Implications of Armed-Conflict on Education (Grant Recipient)
- Urban Education Task Force Focus Group Facilitator
- Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment High Scope Tool Training
- Providence Wellness Policy Committee
- Providence Arts Learning Pathways Research Group