Ken Wagner, Ph.D.
Commissioner

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

Enclosure 6b
October 11, 2016

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Ken Wagner, Ph.D., Commissioner

RE: The R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees – Recommendation of Appointee

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I recommend the following individual to fill a current vacancy on the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees:

- Jodi Merryman

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of Jodi Merryman to the R.I. School for the Deaf Board of Trustees, as presented.

Jodi Merryman

BIO:

Jodi Merryman is a casework supervisor at the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals/Division of Developmental Disabilities. She earned her Bachelors in Social Work Degree from Providence College and her Masters Degree in Social Work from RI College. She started her career as an undergraduate intern at the RI School for the Deaf as well as a direct care staff at Corliss Center. For the last 21 years Jodi has worked for the State of RI, first at DCYF as a social worker for 10 1/2 years then the last 10 1/2 years at the Division of Developmental Disabilities being promoted to casework supervisor about 5 years ago.

Jodi has been hard of hearing since about age 3 1/2 and attended public schools. She also has a sister who is Deaf and attended the RI School for the Deaf until high school. During that time, Jodi, spent a lot of time at the school attending sign language classes and Camp MeadowWood. Jodi went on to serve on the Board of Trustees at the RI School for the Deaf from 2010-2015 serving on the policy committee, as Vice-Chair and as interim Chair.

Candidate for Board of Trustees at the R.I. School for the Deaf

Jodi Merryman

1. **Background:**

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

I have previously served on the Board from 2010-2015 and saw it through some very challenging times. After taking some personal time I am interested in returning to continue to support the school in moving forward on it way to becoming a school that the people of RI can be proud of.

2. **Qualifications:**

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

I feel I have a number of qualities and strengths that I could bring to the Board. This includes my personal experience as a hard of hearing person and sibling of a Deaf former student as well as my professional experience as a direct care staff, social worker and casework supervisor working with individuals who are Deaf/hard of hearing and also diagnosed developmental or intellectual disabilities. I also can bring some historical knowledge of the Board from my prior tenure on the Board. Finally, I will bring my ability to remain calm, fair and objective when making difficult decisions as well as being able to help provide a vision for the school as it continues to make progress towards providing high level education and supports to Deaf and hard of hearing students.

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 feel I am flexible enough to focus on any particular area that the Board may feel my strengths and experience will best suit the needs of the Board and the school community.