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# **Rhode Island Board of Education**

## **Proposal for Public Education Governance & Administration for Governor and General Assembly**

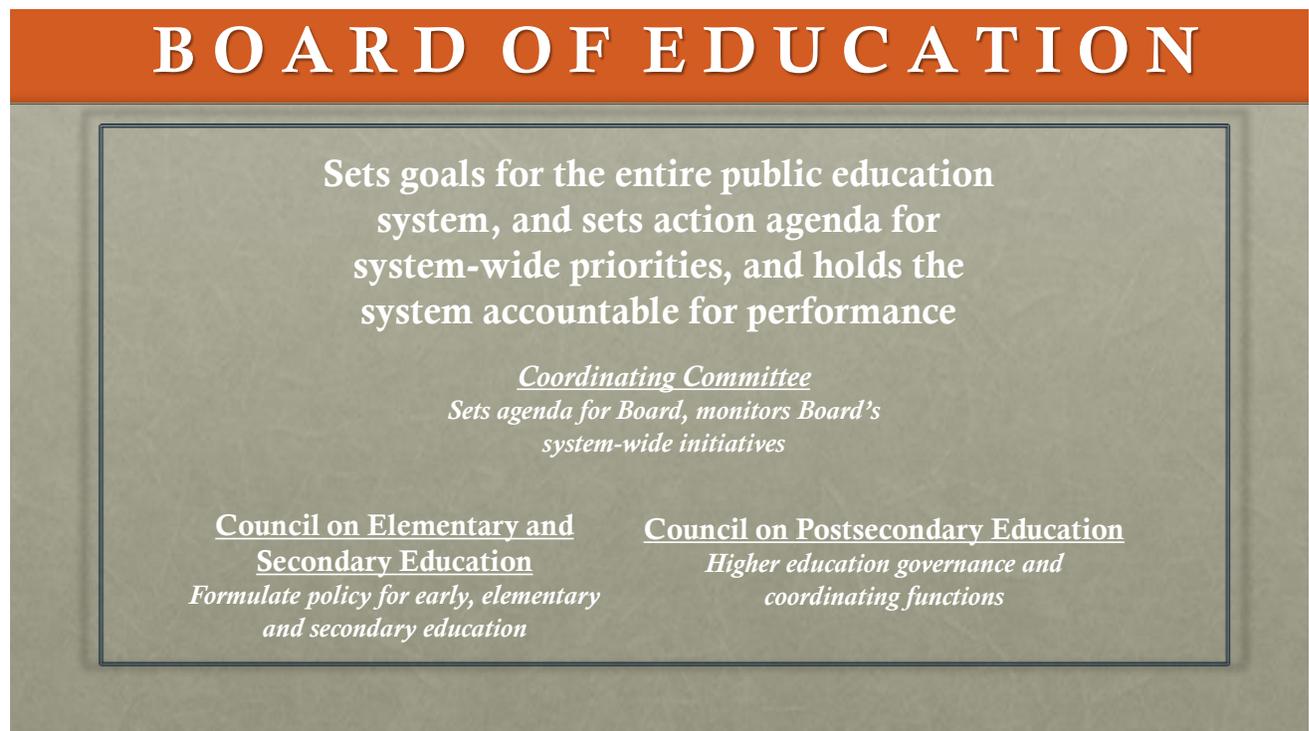
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*The state fiscal year 2013 appropriation act made significant changes in the state's public education governance to improve the quality of education in Rhode Island. One aspect of the act required the Board of Education to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a final plan for the permanent administrative structure for higher education. This document provides the primary components of the proposal, which, in alignment with the goals of the General Assembly, attempts to improve the quality of the entire public education system to assure student success at every level and to provide for the effective and efficient governance of the public Pre-K through elementary and secondary education and higher education systems.*

December 9, 2013

## **Governance**

The Board fully embraces the promise of a single Board of Education as put forth by the General Assembly. The Board of Education will address the performance of a single public education system that effectively and efficiently serves Rhode Islanders from their pre-kindergarten years, through elementary and secondary school and into postsecondary education and adult education. In addition to serving on the Board, each member will serve on one of two councils, responsible for addressing issues specific to either elementary and secondary education or postsecondary education. The Councils will focus on regulatory and governance issues, which is especially significant in the postsecondary system, as the Board is not advocating for institution-level governing boards at this time.



## **Board of Education**

The Board serves to improve the quality of the public education system and to promote collaboration and efficiency. The Board will focus on assuring that students are successful at every level and have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in a thriving 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce and to contribute to our Rhode Island community. The Board, expanded to 15 members, will meet 4-6 times per year, and its responsibilities include:

- setting goals for the education system and determining metrics for measuring progress;
- Holding the system accountable for performance on goals;
- setting an action agenda to address core system-wide priorities (e.g., workforce skills, instructional technology, operational efficiencies);

- recommending budget parameters aligned with goals;
- reviewing elementary and secondary education and postsecondary strategic plans for alignment to goals;
- reviewing progress on goals and action agenda and addressing gaps in progress; and
- annually reporting on progress to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The Governor appoints the Board Chair and members, with the Advice and Consent of the Senate. The Board also plays a lead role in advocating for the Rhode Island public education system.

### **Coordinating Committee**

The Coordinating Committee assures that the Board's goals are reflected in the strategic plans adopted by the Councils and sets the meeting agenda for the Board. The Committee also monitors the implementation and operation of priority system-wide initiatives of the Board's action agenda. The Committee is made up of the Board Chair, the Council Chairs, and the two Commissioners.

### **Council on Elementary and Secondary Education**

The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education is comprised of 7 members of the Board and has full statutory authority for elementary and secondary governance and regulation. The Board Chair, after discussion with all members, will appoint members to the Council and select the Chair. It meets monthly, and its responsibilities include:

- adopting standards;
- implementing and enforcing regulations;
- generally supervising elementary and secondary education;
- developing budgets for the elementary and secondary system; and
- appointing the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education reports to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **Council on Postsecondary Education**

The Council on Postsecondary Education is comprised of 7 members of the Board. The Board Chair, after discussion with all members, will appoint members to the Council and select the Chair. This Council has full statutory authority for higher education governance and coordinating functions, per RIGL 16-59-1 and 16-59-4. It meets monthly, and its responsibilities include:

- assuring institutional accountability;
- supporting accreditation;
- granting tenure;
- overseeing tuition, budget, and capital financing;
- appointing the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education and the college and university Presidents;

- assuring mission differentiation and promoting alignment and efficiencies among the institutions; and
- assuring credit portability and recovery.

This Council has all of the proper authority to serve as the institutions' governing body for accreditation purposes. The college and university Presidents report directly to this Council, as does the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education.

## **Administration**

### **Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE)**

The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education will report to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. RIDE and the Council will develop and adopt a strategic plan to dedicate RIDE's resources to the support of the Board's goals, working with the higher education system and other partners.

### **Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner**

This proposal calls for a new entity, the "Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner," to support the governance and coordination responsibilities of the Council on Postsecondary Education and to work with the higher education institutions to facilitate policy initiatives of the Board and Council. This Office will provide leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island's public higher education system, working with partners in all levels of education, government, business, and the nonprofit sectors.

Specific governance and coordination functions for the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner include:

- managing institutional accountability per accreditation standards;
- developing academic and student affairs policy – e.g., program approval, articulation, tenure review;
- developing a higher education financing framework aligned with Board goals, budget analysis for the Council on Postsecondary Education, facilitating operational efficiencies;
- providing legal representation for the Council and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and coordinating legal policy across the institutions;
- representing the Council in contracting and performance reviews and coordinating human resources policies across the institutions; and
- Developing policy analysis and research, particularly concerning the use of data and information for policy-making and accountability.

These functions will be carried out by a staff of 12 full-time equivalent employees and with an annual operating budget of \$2,000,000, to provide salaries, benefits, purchased services, and general operating expenses.

The Board also proposes that the Council on Postsecondary Education be allowed to grant authority and responsibility for select management decisions to the college and university Presidents.