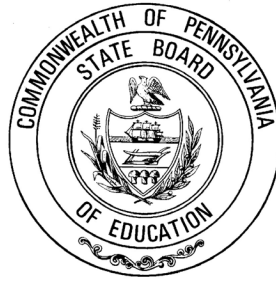


PENNSYLVANIA  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

March 2025

# **PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **OVERVIEW**

The State Board of Education consists of 21 voting members, 10 of whom serve on the Board's Council of Basic Education and 10 of whom serve on the Board's Council of Higher Education. Seventeen members are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for overlapping terms of six years, or until their successors are appointed and confirmed. Four members of the Board are members of the General Assembly who serve as long as they hold the position of majority and minority chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees. The Chairperson of the Board and its Councils are designated by the Governor and serve at his pleasure. The 21 voting members of the board also serve as the State Board for Career and Technical Education.

The Board meets at least six times per year. Additional Council or Board meetings are held at the call of the chairpersons or at the request of a majority of members. Board committees are appointed by the chairperson of the Board to formulate policy proposals in those areas which fall within the purview of the Board. Council committees are appointed by the chairperson of each respective Council to formulate policy proposals in those areas which fall within the purview of either Council.

The Secretary of Education is the head of the Department of Education and the chief executive officer of the State Board of Education. The Secretary is a member of the executive department of the Commonwealth and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Secretary of Education, or the Secretary's designated representative, is entitled to attend all meetings of the Board and Councils and has the right to speak on all matters before the Board and the Councils, but not to vote.

The chairperson of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC), or a PSPC member designated by the chairperson, serves as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Board. Likewise, a member of the State Board serves in the same capacity on the PSPC.

Four student representatives serve as non-voting, advisory members of the Board – two high school students who sit on the Council of Basic Education and two postsecondary students who sit on the Council of Higher Education. Annually, two new students are selected to serve a two-year term on each respective Council. High school students are selected through an application process managed by the Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils. Postsecondary students are selected to represent the various sectors of higher education in the Commonwealth on a rotating basis. Student members were added by the Board in 2008, and their participation is supported through grant funds made available by Highmark.

# **MEMBERSHIP**

The following are listings of the State Board of Education's membership, reflecting transitions throughout the 2024 calendar year.

## **State Board of Education**

January 2024

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Dr. Khalid N. Mumin**  
Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

### **Council of Basic Education**

**Dr. A Lee Williams** (Slippery Rock)  
Chair, Council of Basic Education

Honorable Carol Aichele (Malvern)

Senator David Argall  
Majority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Mr. Nathan Barrett (Scranton)

Ms. Claire Chi  
Senior Student Member

Ms. Katherine Christiano (Devon)

Ms. Aarushi Dedhiya  
Junior Student Member

Mr. Ernest Hadrick III (Norristown)

Dr. Jeffrey Keeling (Hadley)

Honorable Maureen Lally-Green (Mars)

Representative Peter Schweyer  
Majority Chair, House Education Committee

### **Council of Higher Education**

**Honorable Pedro Rivera** (Lancaster)  
Chairman, Council of Higher Education

Dr. Nicole Carnicella (Bellefonte)

Ms. Brenna Chernich  
Junior Student Member

Ms. Sandra Dungee Glenn (Philadelphia)

Mrs. Amanda Hetrick (Titusville)

Ms. Natalie Imhoof  
Senior Student Member

Mr. Robert Mitchell (Jefferson)

Dr. Monica Taylor (Drexel Hill)

Representative Jesse Topper  
Minority Chair, House Education Committee

Senator Lindsey Williams  
Minority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Dr. Benjamin Wilson (Erie)

Dr. Nicole Hill  
PSPC Ex-officio Member

Ms. Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

# State Board of Education

April 2024

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Dr. Khalid N. Mumin**  
Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

## Council of Basic Education

**Dr. A Lee Williams** (Slippery Rock)  
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Majority Chair, Senate Education Committee

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Senior Student Member

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Majority Chair, House Education Committee

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**Honorable Pedro Rivera** (Lancaster)  
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PSPC Ex-officio Member

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Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

# State Board of Education

July 2024

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Dr. Khalid N. Mumin**  
Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

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Senator David Argall  
Majority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Mr. Nathan Barrett (Scranton)

Ms. Naina Bhatia  
Junior Student Member

Ms. Katherine Christiano (Devon)

Ms. Aarushi Dedhiya  
Senior Student Member

Mr. Ernest Hadrick III (Norristown)

Dr. Jeffrey Keeling (Hadley)

Honorable Maureen Lally-Green (Mars)

Representative Peter Schweyer  
Majority Chair, House Education Committee

## Council of Higher Education

**Honorable Pedro Rivera** (Lancaster)  
Chairman, Council of Higher Education

Ms. Brenna Chernich  
Senior Student Member

Ms. Yadira Cupeles  
Junior Student Member

Ms. Sandra Dungee Glenn (Philadelphia)

Mrs. Amanda Hetrick (Titusville)

Mr. Robert Mitchell (Jefferson)

Dr. Monica Taylor (Drexel Hill)

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Senator Lindsey Williams  
Minority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Dr. Benjamin Wilson (Erie)

Dr. Nicole Hill  
PSPC Ex-officio Member

Ms. Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

# State Board of Education

December 2024

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Dr. Khalid N. Mumin**  
Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

## Council of Basic Education

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Dr. Benjamin Wilson (Erie)

Dr. Nicole Hill  
PSPC Ex-officio Member

Ms. Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

*There are currently three vacancies on the State Board of Education.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education was created by the General Assembly in 1963 and reestablished in 1988. It is the principal administrative regulatory body for both elementary and secondary education and higher education in the Commonwealth. It has the power and duty to review and adopt regulations that govern educational policies and principles and establish standards governing the educational programs of the Commonwealth, upon recommendation of its Councils. The Board also has the authority and duty to approve or disapprove an application for the creation of a new school district, or change in the boundaries of an existing school district; establish committees of professional and technical advisors to assist the councils in performing research studies undertaken by them; manage and have custody of the State School Fund; apply for, receive and administer Federal grants, appropriations, allocations and programs within its purview; adopt policies with regard to institutions of higher education; and, adopt master plans for basic and higher education.

The State Board of Education engages in constant review and appraisal of education in the Commonwealth. The Board's evaluation takes into account such matters as educational objectives, alternative organizational patterns, alternative programs of study, and the operating efficiency of the education system. The chairperson of the State Board refers all studies and investigations to one of its Councils, and receives and places on the agenda the findings and recommendations of the Council for appropriate action by the Board.

For purposes of studying issues and developing policy proposals, the Board is divided into two councils – the Council of Basic Education and the Council of Higher Education. The Council of Basic Education has the power and duty to develop a master plan for basic education in the Commonwealth for adoption by the Board; investigate programs, conduct research studies and formulate policy programs in all educational areas not within the purview of higher education; encourage and promote such agricultural, industrial, career and technical education programs as the needs of this Commonwealth may require; and investigate and make recommendations pertaining to the work of any schools of design, schools of industrial arts or industrial schools to which the General Assembly may make an appropriation.

The Council of Higher Education has the power and duty to develop a master plan for higher education in the Commonwealth for adoption by the Board; develop standards for the approval of colleges and universities for granting of certification and degrees; develop standards for all higher education building projects involving the use of state funds or the funds of any Commonwealth instrumentality; and, investigate programs, conduct research studies and formulate policy proposals in all areas pertaining to higher education in the Commonwealth, including a system of community colleges and technical institutions as provide by law.

The Board also serves as the State Board of Career and Technical Education and, in this capacity, sets policy and promulgates regulations regarding career and technical education in Pennsylvania at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. The Board met for the first time as the State Board of Career and Technical Education in January 2020 following the passage of Act 76 of 2019 that updated terminology throughout the Public School Code of 1949 by replacing references to “vocational-technical education” with “career and technical education”. Prior to January 2020, the Board was referred to as the State Board for Vocational-Technical Education.

Much of the Board’s work occurs in meetings of its standing committees, including the Committees on Academic Standards/Chapter 4; Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness; and Career and Technical Education. Ad Hoc and Special Committees also are established from time to time to oversee special projects.

Board committees are the bodies that conduct public meetings to solicit comments, concerns and questions from members of the general public, as well as those involved in the education enterprise on a particular education regulation or issue. When the Board decides to review a current regulation or develop a new one, it typically begins the process with roundtable discussions or public hearings conducted in several locations throughout the state. The committee takes the information it learns during this exercise and develops recommendations that can take the form of a report or revised regulations.

Proposed regulations are published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Additional public comments on a proposed regulation, as well as comments received from the House and Senate Education Committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, are considered and, based on this stakeholder input, the Board may make further refinements to the regulation that it deems necessary in crafting a final regulation.



## **State Board of Education Activity: 2024**

Pursuant to Section 2603-B of the Public School Code of 1949, 24 P.S. § 26-2603-B, the State Board of Education (Board) is pleased to provide a report on its activities for the 2024 calendar year.

### **Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessment)**

Academic standards are part of the Board's regulations at 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4. The State Board of Education continued to prioritize reviews of state academic standards as a primary focus of its work in 2024. The Board completed a comprehensive periodic review of the existing academic standards for Career Education and Work (CEW), Economics (ECON), and Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) as directed by Act 35 of 2023. In the fall of 2024, the Board approved a final-form rulemaking that included the first-ever updates to the state's CEW, ECON, and FCS standards. These updated standards will take effect in the 2026-2027 school year.

In that same final-form rulemaking, the Board also established new Academic Standards for Personal Finance that include content in six key areas of financial literacy: 1) Personal Finance Fundamentals, 2) Income, 3) Spending, 4) Saving and Investing, 5) Risk and Insurance, and 6) Credit. The standards are organized in grade bands covering grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. In Act 35 of 2023, the General Assembly established a new requirement for high school students to complete a mandatory course in personal financial literacy once during grade 9, 10, 11, or 12. School entities in the Commonwealth must provide the required course beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, and the Personal Finance standards adopted by the Board establish guideposts to which such courses will be aligned.

The new Academic Standards for Personal Finance and updates to the standards for CEW, ECON, and FCS were informed by the work of standards review committees comprised of Pennsylvania educators and other content experts. Additional input was provided by other interested stakeholders and by members of the General Assembly who participated in public hearings and submitted written comments on drafts of the proposed academic standards. The

Board expresses gratitude to all of the individuals who contributed to the review and development of these new and updated academic standards.

Work to review the state's academic standards will continue to be a central part of the Board's agenda moving forward. In the fall of 2024, the Board determined that it will initiate a comprehensive periodic review of two additional sets of standards. The Academic Standards for Arts and Humanities and the Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education will be opened for review in 2025. The Board finds immense value in engaging Pennsylvania educators and content experts in the standards review process. As such, the Board again requested that the Pennsylvania Department of Education serve in partnership to support this next phase of work on academic standards by convening teams of educators and other content experts to develop initial recommendations on whether these standards should be updated. The Board requested that nominees to serve on these standards review committees be presented for approval in March of 2025.

At the same time it considered updates to state academic standards, the Board also acted to amend other unrelated provisions within Chapter 4. In 2024, the Board granted final approval to shift the administration of the state's elementary-level science assessment from grade 4 to grade 5. This change in the administration of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) was made to align the assessment with the end of the grade band structure in new academic standards that were adopted by the Board in 2022 (the Pennsylvania Integrated Standards for Science, Environment, Ecology, Technology and Engineering (Grades K-5)) to which the elementary Science PSSA will be aligned. This shift in administration of the Science PSSA will take effect in the 2025-2026 school year, the same year in which the related academic standards take effect.

Other final-form amendments to Chapter 4 approved by the Board require school entities to make various strategic plans publicly accessible on their websites after the plans are approved by the school entities' governing board. This includes plans for educator professional development, induction, student services, special education, and gifted education.

## **Public Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Accreditation**

The State Board of Career and Technical Education (SBCTE) holds the authority to accredit public postsecondary career and technical education programs in Pennsylvania through approval granted by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The SBCTE's scope of authority is limited to accrediting career and technical centers that offer non-degree granting career and technical programs for adults approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) that are 300 hours or longer in duration. The SBCTE evaluates institutions that seek voluntary accreditation under this authority through a partnership with the Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) within the Department. The SBCTE, through the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, authorizes BCTE to manage the state's accreditation program.

During 2024, the SBCTE considered applications for re-accreditation from three public postsecondary career and technical centers. The Board considered findings from a review of each application by BCTE, considered a recommendation developed on each application from an external advisory body (the Institutional Accreditation Advisory Group), and deliberated on whether each application met the established accreditation guidelines. Reviews of the application submitted by each institution found no non-compliance issues relative to the Pennsylvania Public Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Accreditation Guidelines. As such, the Board granted re-accreditation to the following three institutions for another five years: Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center, Clearfield County Career and Technology Center, and Indiana County Technology Center.

The SBCTE anticipated also reviewing additional materials in support of an application for re-accreditation of Lebanon County Career and Technology Center (LCCTC). In September of 2023, the SBCTE considered LCCTC's application for re-accreditation and, based on findings of that review, granted LCCTC probationary accreditation with stipulations for a one-year period. However, prior to the expiration of its probationary accreditation period, LCCTC notified the Department that it would no longer pursue renewal of its accreditation. As such, the SBCTE did not further consider LCCTC's application.

In July of 2024, the SBCTE also adopted clarifying amendments to the Pennsylvania Public Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Accreditation Guidelines. Amendments to the guidelines were responsive to clarifications requested by the U.S. Department of Education in the federal Department's determination to extend the Board's authority to continue serving as an accreditor of postsecondary public career and technical education programs in the Commonwealth for another four years. The clarifications update the section of the guidelines that address annual operational reports that must be submitted by each accredited institution. The updates added reporting elements to these monitoring reports related to enrollment data and related to study survey data regarding employment. These new reporting elements will help to provide greater clarity surrounding student placement and what constitutes success under "state-defined threshold levels."

### **Career and Technical Education**

In March of 2024, the State Board of Career and Technical Education approved revisions to the State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs) in Pennsylvania's Perkins V State Plan. The proposed revisions were developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in consultation with stakeholders. The revisions added the Keystone Biology assessment as an indicator of academic proficiency in science at the secondary level. The revisions also extended the Perkins V SDPLs for four years through 2027-2028.

### **Private School Accreditation**

Under the Private Academic Schools Act, private and non-public schools may operate in Pennsylvania without state licensure if they are accredited by an organization approved by the State Board of Education. The Board's process for evaluating organizations to serve as approved accreditors is set forth in the Statement of Policy on Accrediting Organizations published at 22 Pa. Code Chapter 52. That policy statement establishes that the Board will grant approvals to accrediting organizations for five-year intervals and that existing accreditors may apply to renew their authority.

Three organizations currently are recognized by the Board to serve as approved private school accrediting bodies. During 2024, one accrediting body – Cognia – submitted an application seeking to renew its status as an approved accreditor. The Board’s Special Committee on Private School Accreditation (Special Committee) led a review of Cognia’s application in partnership with a team from the Department of Education. Both the Department and the Special Committee determined that Cognia has strong accreditation protocols and procedures for reviewing initial applications, granting candidacy status, initial accreditation and renewal of accreditation. As such, the Board renewed Cognia’s authority to continue serving as an approved private school accrediting body with a scope of authority covering pre-K(nursery), kindergarten, elementary, secondary and special education private academic schools, tutoring centers, educational testing and remedial centers.

Throughout 2024, the Board and the Department also continued to review two applications previously received from new entities – Lumen Accreditation and the Association of Christian Schools International – seeking to be recognized as approved accrediting organizations for private and non-public schools. The Board also notified two current approved private schools accreditors – the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools – of the need to submit applications for renewal in advance of the expiration of their current authority in September of 2025 if they would like to continue serving as recognized accrediting bodies in the Commonwealth.