

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF BASIC EDUCATION

Thursday, January 28, 2010
Rachel Carson Building
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by Karen Farmer White, acting on behalf of Dr. James Barker, Chairman.

Council Members Attending:

Mr. Larry Wittig
Mrs. Karen Farmer White
Dr. Arnold Hillman
Mr. Daniel Fogarty
Mr. Gardiner Kreglow

Mrs. Mollie Phillips
Mrs. Connie Davis
Mr. Travis Gilbert
Senator Jeffrey Piccola

Absent:

Dr. James Barker
Mr. Edward Sheehan, Jr.
Rep. James Roebuck, Jr.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Karen Farmer White, acting on behalf of the Chairman of the Council of Basic Education, announced that the Chapter 4 regulations strengthening high school graduation requirements were published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on January 9, 2010. The Department of Education is currently forming three advisory committees as required by the rulemaking. The State Board's Committee on Student Health and Wellness met on January 27, 2010 to discuss draft regulations on student nutrition.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2009 Council of Basic Education meeting was approved unanimously on a Davis/Phillips motion.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Deputy Secretary Castelbuono reminded the Board that Pennsylvania was one of 41 states that submitted a Race to the Top application. The aim of the proposal is to provide systemic supports for all schools as well as targeted interventions for the schools and districts in greatest need of improvement. Ms. Castelbuono reported that the Department will be submitting mid-year reports on dual enrollment and accountability block grants to the legislature and noted the online web portal for the Standards Aligned System. The Department is preparing to pilot its classroom diagnostic tools, which are computer adaptive online tests designed to provide classroom teachers with real-time information about their students' academic strengths and weaknesses. The diagnostics will be field tested in the spring and operational from September through June.

ACTIVITIES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Karen Farmer White recognized Secretary of Health Everette James to discuss his agency's efforts to coordinate health and wellness initiatives in schools. Secretary James highlighted several activities undertaken by the Department of Health, including growth and BMI screening in kindergarten through 12th grade, obesity prevention at the local level, and grant programs to increase physical activity in 40 schools.

Dan Fogarty encouraged individuals to think about time considerations, and noted that there should be a way to find time within a school day to include 30 minutes of physical activity. Mr. Fogarty also noted a study regarding the current use of athletic facilities to determine the extent to which all students use the facilities as opposed to use by a more select number of students. This manner of analysis might help schools make better use of existing facilities.

Sheila Dow Ford highlighted the importance of parental involvement with other community partners such as the YMCA and churches. Secretary James indicated that those activities are important, and that joint efforts demonstrate the importance of physical activities.

Secretary James mentioned an interest in informing students and parents about the nutritional content of school meals.

VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDY COMMISSION

Karen Farmer White recognized Dr. Arnold Hillman to discuss the activities of the Virtual High School Commission. Act 61 of 2008 established a commission composed of education officials, members of the General Assembly, broadband cable industry representatives, and cyber charter school chief executive officers to investigate and make recommendations about virtual education that would provide secondary students with access to a wide range of learning services. The commission determined that it was not interested in investigating virtual high school, but in virtual education more generally. Dr. Hillman provided the commission's report and its recommendations to the State Board.

On a related note, Deputy Secretary Castelbuono indicated that the Commission's work was the impetus behind the Department's proposal to fund the development of online classes in its Race to the Top application.

Dan Fogarty encouraged the involvement of career and technical education in this work going forward.

RACE TO THE TOP

Karen Farmer White asked Beth Olanoff, Policy Director for the Department of Education, to provide an overview of the state's Race to the Top application as well as the next steps in the competition. The Department submitted its application on January 19, 2010 to compete in Phase One for \$400 million dollars along with 41 other states. In this extremely competitive initiative, states need to make a strong case about their foundation for reform as well

as how they will use the money to advance reforms in specific areas. Priority will be given to states that emphasize collaboration as evidenced by buy-in across the state and at the local levels on some of the major issues targeted by the federal government. Awards will be announced in early April.

The four reform pillars of Race to the Top are: 1) employing great teachers and leaders; 2) using high-quality standards and assessments; 3) turning around the lowest achieving schools; and 4) using data systems to support instruction. Pennsylvania organized its application around six specific areas that aligned with these priorities. Pennsylvania's application focuses on the Standards Aligned System, data systems capable of supporting reform, a world class pipeline of teachers and leaders, robust multi-measure evaluation systems, a coherent approach to professional development, efforts to turn around the lowest performing schools and identification and evaluation of best practices. Pennsylvania was one of a handful of states that required superintendents, school board presidents, and local teacher union presidents to sign on and jointly commit to implementing reforms.

The potential adoption by the State Board of the Common Core Standards under development by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers is another aspect of the state's application.

The application also proposes the creation of a new entity, the Consortium for Pennsylvania Research Evaluation and Policy Analysis. This is a partnership between the Pennsylvania State Board, the Department of Education and a research entity and will be the vehicle for monitoring improvement strategies and ensuring faithful implementation of reforms.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tim Allwein from the Pennsylvania School Boards Association commended the Department of Education and Secretary Zahorchak and countless others who worked on the Race to the Top application.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

Karen Farmer-White referred to the Board's legal counsel to make an announcement for the Academic Standards Committee. Deputy General Counsel Gregory Dunlap announced that, in accordance with the Sunshine Act, the Academic Standards Committee on January 8, 2010, met in executive session for approximately one hour beginning at 2:15 p.m. The meeting was called by the chair of the State Board to discuss the Commonwealth's application for federal funding under the Race to the Top (RTTT) program. With the deadline for the application fast approaching, the chair of the State Board desired the members' advice and counsel before he signed the application. In the meeting, State Board staff, including its legal counsel, explained the requirements of the RTTT program and the contents of the Commonwealth's RTTT application, and role of the State Board as described in the application. The meeting was

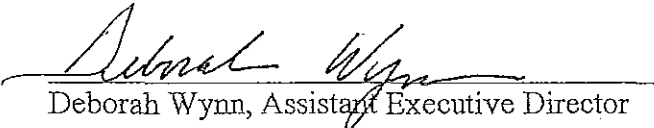
conducted in executive session because a key component of the meeting involved the committee's receipt of professional and legal advice regarding the RTTT process and the Regulatory Review Act as it would be applied to rulemaking relevant to the RTTT program. No official action was taken by the committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at by motion of Mr. Dan Fogarty, seconded by Dr. Arnold Hillman.


Deborah Wynn, Assistant Executive Director