

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF BASIC EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126**

November 8, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m. by Dr. James Barker.

Attending:

James Agras *(via phone)*
Andrew Ahr
Carol Aichele
James Barker
Nicole Carnicella
Sandra Dungee Glenn

John Eichelberger
James Grandon
Pamela Gunter-Smith
(via phone)
Kirk Hallett
Shirlann Harmon

Maureen Lally-Green
(via phone)
Jonathan Peri
Craig Snider
Karen Farmer White
Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 13, 2017, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Farmer White/Aichele** motion.

PRESENTATION
**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH (STEM) INITIATIVES &
COMPUTER SCIENCE STANDARDS**

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem introduced Judd Pittman, Special Consultant to the Secretary of Education for STEM. Mr. Pittman presented the CSTA K-12 Computer Science Standards to the Board and requested that the Board consider endorsing and publicly supporting the standards. Mr. Pittman presented data on the large number of jobs in Pennsylvania that will require STEM skill sets by 2018 and the significant growth that is projected over the next decade in jobs that will require computer science skills. He presented data on the number of Pennsylvania students that were enrolled in a computer science class in high school last year and the number of Pennsylvania students who took the computer science advance placement test in 2015, noting the lack of diversity in the body of students who pursued the AP computer science exam.

Mr. Pittman discussed how the CSTA K-12 Computer Standards, an initiative of the Computer Science Teachers Association, were developed. He then reviewed the Standards' Core Principals and Core Concepts.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Pittman also provided an update on the status of STEM education in the Commonwealth and various STEM initiatives supported by the Department,

including the Pennsylvania STEM Coalition, Pennsylvania as Computer Science for All state, and educator training in Code.org K-12 resources.

Dr. Barker expressed concern regarding underrepresentation of women and minorities in the computer science field and inquired about what steps the Department of Education (PDE) is taking to bridge that gap. Mr. Pittman shared that the Department is intentional about who it engages and noted that PDE has reached out to businesses, Girls Who Code, urban schools, and after school programs in efforts focused on equality and engaging culturally-relevant pedagogy.

Sandra Dungee Glenn thanked Mr. Pittman for his thorough explanation of the CSTA K-12 Computer Science Standards and asked what the Board should be focused on pertaining to educator certifications and Chapter 49 in order to better prepare teachers for the STEM disciplines. Mr. Pittman said that he will work with Deputy Secretary Noe Ortega to provide information to the Board on STEM and Chapter 49.

Carol Aichele asked if PDE would work with universities to require that elementary certification requirements include an intense component of Computer Science/Biology as part of teacher preparation. Mr. Stem replied that Ms. Aichele's comments represent a long-range strategy and that PDE intends to keep the Board involved in certification pathways.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem reported on various initiatives of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. He presented statistics on use of PDE's Equity and Inclusion Initiative Toolkit and discussed plans to create a dedicated course around cultural competency as part of the Pennsylvania Inspired Leaders program. He also provided an update on efforts to complete the design in the Future Ready PA Index, including meetings of PDE leadership and external stakeholder feedback sessions being held in fall 2017 and planned for winter 2018. The Deputy Secretary reminded the Council that the Future Ready PA Index is scheduled for release in Fall 2018.

Mr. Stem also reported on PDE's plan to shorten the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams. Beginning in the Spring of 2018, the PSSA will be shortened by 20%. He said that additional forthcoming changes will impact the 2019 testing calendar by reducing the testing weeks from three to two which will create more instructional time in classrooms. Mr. Stem said the Department also is exploring score time reductions to try to get state assessment results back to schools in a more timely manner.

The Deputy Secretary spoke in more detail about the Career Readiness Indicator proposed to be included in the Future Ready PA Index. He said the indicator was the focus of recent stakeholder engagement sessions and that guidance on the indicator was released to schools in October. The indicator would be based on evidence completed and cumulatively collected in a K-12 career portfolio and would be reported at the end of grades 5, 8, and 11.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Clayton, Assistant Director of Education Services with the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), complimented Mr. Pittman and PDE's work on STEM. Mr. Clayton said that PSEA is forming partnerships with PDE to incorporate STEM, the standards process and certification into its current Professional Development initiatives.

Judy Bookhamer, Executive Director of Pennsylvania School Counselors Association (PSCA), thanked PDE for recognizing school counselors as key players in ensuring that every student succeeds. In working with the American School Counselors Association, PSCA was excited that there were 26 references to school counselors or counseling programs in Pennsylvania's ESSA Plan. Ms. Bookhamer said she had not seen anything comparable to Pennsylvania's plan and that it is one of the best plans as it pertains to College and Career Readiness.

Dr. Robert Sklaroff provided comments regarding the Holocaust education bill that did not ask that schools choose one of the three elements – Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Violations. Dr. Sklaroff commented that the Board's survey failed to ask the correct questions regarding the bill. Dr. Sklaroff also requested that the Board disassociate from the Southern Poverty Law Center as they are a hate group. He also said that an Open Records request he made led to the receipt of no data which he asserted was a violation of the Open Records law. Finally, Dr. Sklaroff also commented on the problem with subjective criteria in evaluation of standards.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Barker provided an update on work related to the Master Plan for Basic Education. Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) began work in September to update a draft of the Master Plan, and Dr. Barker said that work is well underway. Among the work completed to date, CAIU staff have researched neighboring State Boards of Education to determine whether they produce guidance documents similar to Pennsylvania's Master Plan. CAIU staff have begun to review and analyze available plans from other states, including Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia and Delaware. Dr. Barker said West Virginia responded to CAIU that its plan currently is under review. New York state did not respond to CAIU's inquiry, but CAIU staff indicated that it does not appear to have similar guidance documents on its Board of Education's website.

Dr. Barker said CAIU staff also have conducted outreach with relevant national organizations, such as the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Association of State Boards of Education, to determine if they too produce similar strategic guidance documents. The issues addressed in strategic guidance documents from other states and national associations have been organized into topic-area crosswalks to identify how other documents address the topics our Master Plan must speak to per the School Code.

In addition to researching other existing Master Plans, Dr. Barker reported that CAIU staff also have begun conducting interviews with Department of Education staff and State Board

leadership, as directed by this Board. To date, eight interviews have been conducted and two additional interviews have been requested.

Dr. Barker said he anticipates that the Council will review a draft Master Plan in Spring 2018. When the Council took action to initiate an update to the plan, the Council determined that it would establish a stakeholder engagement process to gather feedback on the draft before the Council sends the plan to the full Board for its consideration. Dr. Barker asked members of the Council to give thought to what that stakeholder engagement should look like so that the Council can solidify plans for conducting that outreach at one of the Board's next meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m. on a **Farmer White/Aichele** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant